You begin with an idea and a...

SKETCH

6 TIPS
TO BETTER
INKING

COLORING
PENCIL ART

DRAWING
VEHICALS
MADE EASY!

PRESENTATION:
SIZE
DOES MATTER

George Pérez
ON THE ULTIMATE TEAM-UP BOOK!

Bob Hickey

Along with his duties with Sketch Magazine, he has been the creative force behind Blood & Roses, StormQuest and Tempered Steele. He currently has a new Blood and Roses series in the works along with his new creator owned series Race Danger which both should be appearing at BLP Comics.
Bob is one of the co-founders of Blue Line Productions. www.bluelinepro.com He can be reached at bobh@bluelinepro.com

Aaron Hubrich

was going to be the next great fantasy illustrator, but something caught his attention in college, and he never looked back...Comics! Aaron has worked in comics since his self publishing days in 1997. It was then that he made a book titled Spellcaster, which began his understanding of the publishing part of the industry. He went on to hone his skills at the now defunct Checker Comics as a computer colorist and designer, then later for Blueline Pro. His other credits include coloring for Image Comics. He lives in the Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati area, minutes away from a city that has shown an enormous amount of patriotism recently. I'm proud of our community and our entire country...We are united.

John Gravato

Born and raised in good ol' South Africa, spent the last 8 years as a freelancer illustrator working on everything from childrens books to advertising and movie storyboards. Moved to Britain in the late 90's, currently illustrating for Games Workshop Ltd and more recently for Gf2 media expanding their manga properties.

Beau Smith

created and writes Parts Unknown currently at Image Comics, writer of The Undertaker for Chaos Comics, The Tenth, Wynonna Earp, Spawn: Book Of Souls, Wolverine/Shi, Batman/Wildcat and the upcoming cross over-Xena/Wonder Woman and several Star Wars stories for Dark Horse.
www.sacredstudios.com/partsunknown

Jason Howard

lives in Holt, Michigan with his wife Shannon and no pets. He is a professional designer who works as the manager of the graphics department of a large corporation. His past comic credits includes work published by Caliber Comics, Blink Comics and Big Bang Comics. He is currently working on penciling a short story for Infinite Dreams Studio and putting the finishing touches on his own comic masterpiece, Local 205. Sharp eyed readers will spot a pinup he did in an issue of BlueLine's own Little White Mouse, as well as a pinup in an upcoming issue of Image's Violent Messiahs. Jason has no website where you can view his work, but if you swing by the house sometime he'll be happy to show you his sketchbook.

Tom Bierbaum,

with wife Mary, has scripted such comics as Legion of Super-Heroes and The Heckler for DC Comics, Xena and Return to Jurassic Park for Topps Comics, Star for Image Comics and Dead Kid Adventures, a creator owned project by Knight Press.

M² a.k.a. Mike Maydak

has been taken under-wing as the patawan in training at the Blue Line Pro ranch. He is learning much from the experienced crew at Sketch about the comic industry and has mastered the technique of "getting lunch". He often contributes in the form of graphic design, writing, and editorial work. He is currently attending school at NKU with a Journalism major. On the side, he works on his fantasy novel.

Chris Dreier

started his inking career in late 1993 with Riot Gear from Triumphant comics. He's since worked with Now Comics, Antarctic Press, Caliber Comics and Dreamsmith Studios. Currently he's working on Angel from Dark Horse Comics. In his spare time he works on his own comic book projects. Contact Chris at dryinks@msn.com.

Flint Henry's

comic career began in the waning days of the independent market of the '80's, where his frenetic and violent style enjoyed a popular run on the fondly remembered Grimjack at First Comics. Over the years to follow, some personal favorites include Lawdog; a creator owned character done with longtime friend Chuck Dixon from Marvel/Epic, as well as numerous Batman related projects from DC. He's also produced a variety of comic product for Todd Toys (now McFarlane Toys), Image, SQP Inc, and Chaos!, as well as Eclipse, Dark Horse, Palladium, and others.

Paul Sizer

teaches graphic design at Western Michigan University, runs his own freelance design and illustration business, and in his spare time writes, illustrates and designs his comic book LITTLE WHITE MOUSE, published by BLP Comics.
Paul lives and works in Kalamazoo, Michigan. See more of Pauls work at:
www.littlewhitemouse.com.

Comic books are a **fun media** and one of the few that anyone could create their own visions to share with others. Blue Line Productions goals are aimed toward the enhancement of art through knowledge and quality art supplies. No matter what it takes we make sure that the reader has the information that they are wanting.

Attention Creators!

If your involved in the comic book industry or want to be involved in the comic book industry, write in and let us know how we are doing and what can we do better. Our Letter's Forum is open to all. Voice your opinion, share your experience with others, or challenge our columnist on their technique and state your own and approach to the subject. We want to hear from you!

A note...

Drive

I once sat in on a question and answer session that Jim Valentino did at Mid-Ohio-Con a few years ago. What really caught my attention was one subject; a subject I could personally relate to. How could someone who works a day job and has a wife and kids be able to illustrate and piece together a story?

Jim replied that if you want to do it then you would find the time to do it and hone and perfect your skills. It was up to you to make the time and put forth the effort.

This brings me to one simple word...

Drive.

We are born with it.

It's what makes us take our first breath, makes us take our first step, and makes us doodle that first doodle.

Drive.

Use your drive to help keep you motivated. Feed off of it. Work hard to develop your skills and prove wrong those who doubted you.

Drive.

Success comes from being driven, and being determined is more then half the battle.

Drive.

My motivation is what has enabled me to bring you this magazine today. It is the final product, the physical form, of my drive to inform and educate. The best quality information for creating comic books fills these pages. All I ask of you is to sit back, enjoy, and look for inspiration in whatever form.

Find your drive and run with it.

I'd like to thank George Pérez for a wonderful interview. I would also like to take this moment and thank Tom Brevoort at Marvel Comics, Andy Mangels, Tom Smith. Without thier patience and willingness to work with us, this issue might not have been.

Take care,

Bob Hickey
bobh@bluelinepro.com
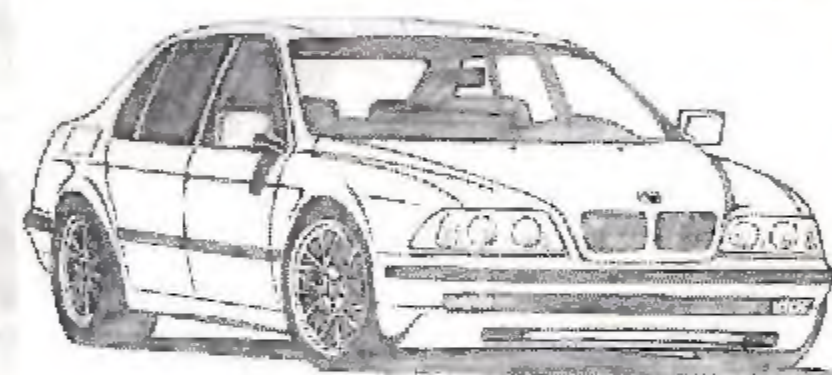
George Pérez Interview...
Once we received the interview and realized just how massive and detailed the interview was. We had to make a decession to either cut the interview in two running the first part in issue #10 and the second part in issue #11 (which we don't believe is fair to make you purchase two issues.), or, run part of it here and part of it on the web site. We realized that not everyone has internet access.
The only other option was to run the whole interview here and run smaller artwork. With this option we oped to offer the artwork at an larger size on our website www.bluelinepro.com. Click on the George Pérez name then click on eack image and enjoy.
We apologize for this inconvence but we feel that the information in the interview is very important.

George Pérez
THE ULTIMATE
TEAM-UP
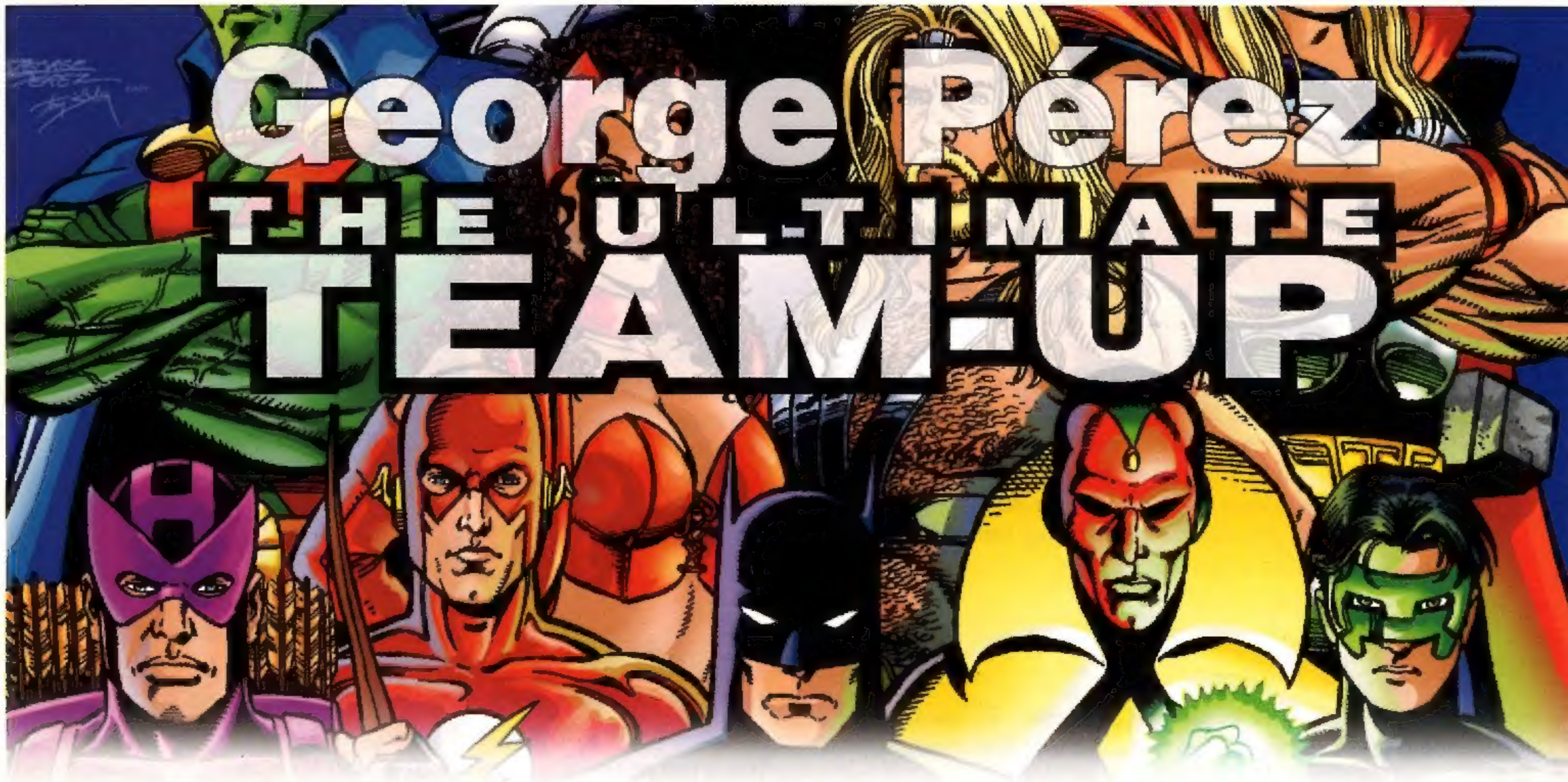
Since his break-in work on colorful Marvel's 70's characters such as Sons of the Tiger and Man-Wolf, Mr. George Pérez has consistently been one of comicdom's most detailed, popular and prolific pencilers. Hard at work on material for both the industry's most-talked about and exciting new company; CrossGen, as well as the book every Marvel and/or DC fan has dreamt of: the upcoming JLA/Avengers crossover; George was kind enough to take a lengthy break from his awe-inspiring art to conduct the following in-depth phone interview with author/Pérez archivist Andy Mangels.

Sketch: Many of the people who are reading the magazine are either people who are early in the industry or who want to be in the industry; so let's talk about how you got your start in comics. Were you a comic fan prior?

Pérez: Well, I had been reading comics since I was about four or five years old. My mother actually encouraged it because we were a Spanish-speaking household and it was a good way of learning English. Obviously, I was entranced by the pictures and the colors and the super-heroes. So, I was more inclined to want to read, and that led me into a love of reading, and to a certain proficiency in English that was needed for school. I was then a little bit ahead of the game by the time that I did start going to school. I already had a basic knowledge of English that a lot of the Puerto Rican kids in my neighborhood might have lacked. I was reading comics pretty much "religiously" based on how much we could afford; we were not a wealthy family — by any stretch of the imagination. So whenever I had a little allowance money, that was the time I would start reading comics. It wasn't really until high school, where I met some "serious" comic book fans, that the desire to actually make it a career really became first and foremost in my mind.

Sketch: Did you have any art training in high school?

Pérez: No. In fact while I did apply in New York for the High School of Art and Design, my parents (particularly my mother) were desirous of my having a Catholic education. So I applied to Cardinal Hayes High School among others, which was a highly respected academic high school. I was accepted there, as well as being accepted into the High School of Arts and Design. Fulfilling my mother's wishes, I did go to Cardinal Hayes, which at the time I applied did have an art program. By the time I actually got to the school, the art program had been canceled. Since I was in the "honors" program they did get me an art course, but it was in "mechanical *drawing*." All it did was help me letter in a straight line, basically.

Sketch: It was right after you were working as a bank teller that you first started to break into comics.

Pérez: Yes. I was a bank teller in Manhattan and going to a few conventions, thanks to some high school friends who were looking to get into the business themselves. Since I was determined to get into the business, I did not go to college, I went directly to work as a bank teller in Manhattan, across the street from DC Comics, as it turned out. I went to a convention in late 1972 or early 1973 and met a few professionals, some of whom gave me some very very harsh, but honest, criticisms for the first time in my life.

I met artist Rich Buckler who also saw my work, and after my unsuccessfully trying to get into the studios, like Continuity or into companies like DC and Marvel, Rich Buckler called me up "one fateful day" while I was at the bank and said if I would be interested in doing some assistant work for him that he would find a place for me. From that point

on, my course was set. I would only work a few more months at the bank before the strain of working part-time for Rich and working full-time at the bank took its toll. I started getting careless with the handling of the money, and inadvertently threw $500.00 into the trash at the end of the day. They definitely knew that my mind was not into banking, so I was fired.

Within two weeks after that, I got my first freelance job. So it was the best thing that could have happened to me. It kind of pushed me. "Now you have no job. Do you want to be an artist and make a living? This is your opportunity."

Sketch: Well that's been true of much of your career. A lot of things have happened because you were (kind of) pushed into it and you said, "Ok, I'm going to rise to the occasion." One of the things, I must go back on this for just a moment, where you talked about how you got really negative criticism. That's something a lot of people don't expect when they go to conventions and go to artist review tables. They're putting their best work forward, they may expect some criticism but they oftentimes don't expect the cold realities of what the industry is. So can you talk a little bit about what you were told, how that effected you, what it meant to in terms of how did you improve yourself and so forth?

Pérez: Well, in actuality, the first criticisms I got were more blanket. The first artist to give me a real negative review was Neal Adams. It was a very curt, direct, review. I didn't have a real portfolio, I just showed him random pieces of artwork that I'd done which is why I always tell aspiring artists, "you have to have a professional presentation or a professional artist will not take you seriously". And that was the case with me. All the criticism or praise was from either family members or school chums— none of whom really knew anything about art— and comic art, in particular.

So it was Neal Adams who gave me a very, very rough review and told me basically not to ink my own work - I obviously don't know what I'm doing – I'm not ready to be working professionally - and other things. In hindsight, they were honest, but as a teenager just having the overwhelming desire to be a comic book artist above all else, it was a real slap in the face. And when I did get into the business - it was a year or more later - Neal Adams did approach me at a party and congratulated me for making it in because you have to take the criticism.

Many times when I received criticism as I was starting out, my ego got the better of me and I would think that the person criticizing my work was absolutely wrong, didn't know anything of what he was talking about, even though they were making a living for probably my entire lifetime. They didn't understand me, as an artist, as it were. I would show them up by going home and working on proving them wrong, when, in actuality, by doing that I proved them *right*. I worked on the exact things they were criticizing. If I couldn't get it right, then I would prove them right just as much, but the fact that I addressed those problems, I not only proved them right, but used that as a positive step towards improving my work. I learned from the criticism.

And as the years go by I realize - and try to tell this to all aspiring artists - that these people are not there to do you a favor. In many cases you're there to show your work *so that they will pay you money*. And if you are going to be paid by them, they have a right to criticize you so that you meet their standards. If you don't, they have no obligation to hire you.

I kept improving out of the sheer fact that I was just too in love with drawing and too fragile of ego to ever admit that they were so right that I could never improve. So I kept improving to prove them wrong - and thus - proved them right.

Sketch: Well you've got a famous story about that with Marv Wolfman, who later became one of your major collaborators. You were working on Sons of the Tiger at that point.

Pérez: Yes. Marv had publicly stated that I was one of a few artists that he predicted would never make it in the industry. And some of the criticisms he gave me were "bad body proportions," "abrupt changes of scenes," "not having proper transitions from one scene to another in the storytelling." And "a lack of background to establish where everybody else was" – He said that establishing shots were missing and I didn't draw enough background into my work. That one final criticism has probably changed my career the most, as far as my reputation.

When I received a request by writer Bill Mantlo on "Sons of the Tiger" to introduce a character, the White Tiger, with a "Will Eisneresque" cityscape wherein the buildings come up to form the words "White Tiger"

(with the White Tiger crouching over the cityscape), it demanded that I use perspective, that I use background, that I have a character anatomically, if not correct, then at least acceptable. Since the character was dressed in a white leotard, there was nothing I could hide the anatomy with. And when I showed that to Marv and I asked, "Have I finally learned this?" He acknowledged that I had.

Another irony in that particular bit; as I said, I came from a poor family. So what comics I bought were the comics I could get at drug stores or candy stores, there being no direct market at the time. When Bill Mantlo described the page as "Will Eisneresque", I had no idea who Will Eisner was. I would later learn - obviously - who Will was, but since The Spirit was not something I had access to, I had no knowledge. Even though I had heard the name one time before from a high school friend, who had read Jim Steranko's History of Comic Books, I myself just said "Ok, buildings, forming into letters. I'll work from there." And I thought, "Wow, this is unique. Has this been done before?" Well, obviously, it had. So it was just my twist on an already well-established design element that Will Eisner had mastered before I was even born!

Sketch: Let's talk a little bit about some of the people who influenced you early on. We'll get on some of the people who influence you still, but right now, who are some of the people who did influence you? I know Curt Swan was one of them.

Pérez: Okay, Curt most definitely, since he was the "Superman" artist of my generation. Jack Kirby started exciting me soon after. Gil Kane, Murphy Anderson. Strangely enough, as much as I didn't care for Mike Sekowsky or John Forte's actual drawing styles, since they drew the Justice League and the Legion of Super-Heroes, respectively, they were also influential in developing my style since I happened to love drawing a bunch of super characters intermingling. But others who also inspired me; John Buscema and Barry Windsor-Smith (or Barry Smith as he was called then), and probably a number of others who I am unforgivably forgetting right now.

Neal Adams was a real shot in the arm for me. Suddenly I saw this very realistic style that I absolutely adored, and of course, ended up becoming a real Neal Adams groupie. When Neal Adams was the one who gave me the harsh, harsh review - you can imagine how much of a trauma that was because he was very, very much one of the men who influenced me the most. But I am very thankful to Neal because it was exactly what I needed at that time.

Sketch: What were some of the things that you feel like you've learned from, say, Curt Swan and Kirby? I think they are two of the ones that - especially in your early work - you can see the most of, in your art.

Pérez: Well, in the case of Curt Swan, his was much more subtle, almost "Norman

Rockwell" in its style. Everything was quiet. Even Superman was relatively normal looking. Despite Superman's powers, Curt gave the character an "every man" quality. Jack was much more of an impressionist when it came to the human body. His sense of dynamics was just overwhelming. I had never seen anything that jumped out of a page quite to the degree of Jack's work. So Jack's work had power. Wherein, I thought Curt Swan's had more silent grace. Then there were those who managed to mingle the two - John Buscema was one. Gil Kane developed a style that was completely his own, but had the great combination of grace and power. Those two were like the extremes for me where I could draw... I don't think Jack could draw "normal everyday, realistic human beings" the way Curt Swan could. But Curt was not the type who could do the kind of in your face, bigger-than-life action that Jack Kirby did.

I thought that everything Jack did seemed bigger than life - *even* regular people. I loved Jack's work. Jack was not a subtle artist, and I think that's what made him so great. And I think Curt's abilities and best things about his work were the fact that there was a sense of, "yes, I am there in the picture," the nice quiet moment. And I guess in the case of Curt Swan, one of the things I loved about it was I came from a rather turbulent, lower income, housing project environment, it was a "Beaver

MARV WOLFMAN & GEORGE PÉREZ
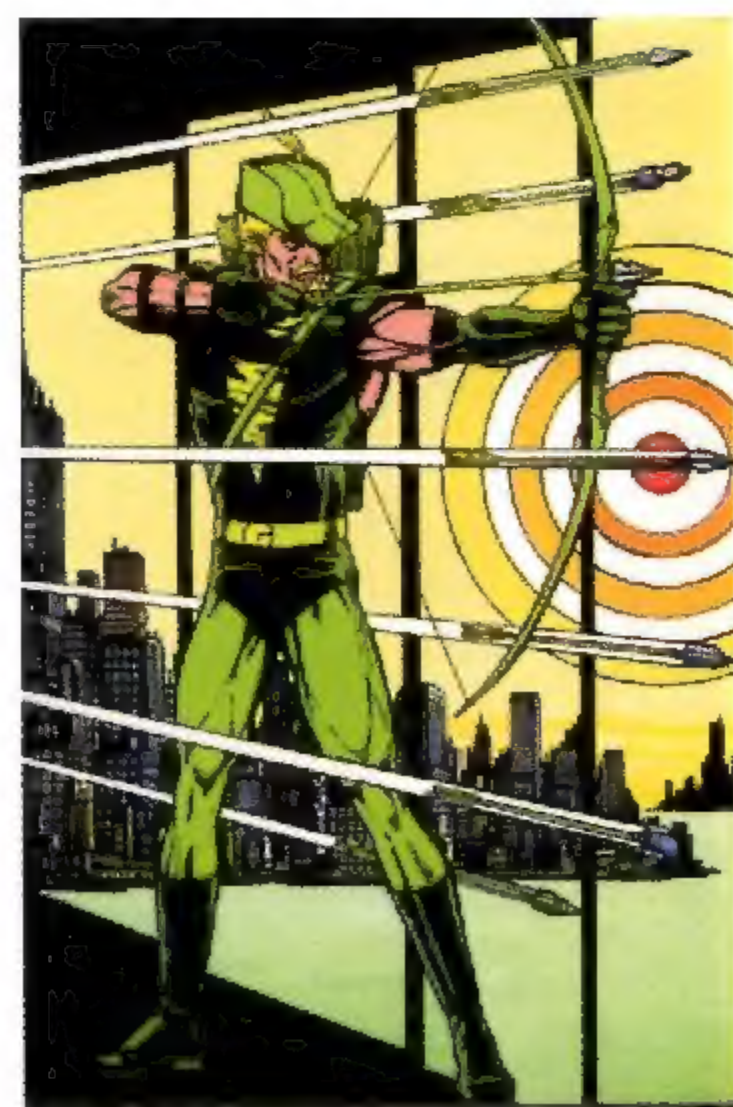
Cleaver" existence that I wish I had. And Jack's world was the great beyond that I can only be visited in the surreal realms of imagination. So those two extremes definitely I found my work falling somewhere in the middle of.

Sketch: At Marvel, you went very quickly from working on one backup project to, suddenly, being everywhere. How did that come about?

Pérez: Well at the time Marvel was in the middle of an incredible expansion, so they had more work than they had talent to handle it. So when I got my first color assignment, which was the "Man-Wolf" for *Creatures On the Loose*, it was because George Tuska was going on vacation. It was not particularly an assignment that Tuska liked. So when I did the first issue the writer at the time, Tony Isabella (with David Kraft actually dialoguing it) saw the work, and thought that, despite the rough edges - and there were a lot of them - the excitement and the natural sense of telling a story were there. So Dave, who replaced Tony as plotter and scripter, asked if I could possibly take over the bimonthly series.

In the meantime while I was waiting for work, they had a story sitting around for the "Sons of the Tiger" feature in *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*. The series was a very minor strip, definitely just a rip-off of the *Enter the Dragon* movie that seemed to have a different artist each issue it appeared. It was not as if anyone really wanted to draw it. But, it was there - I was available – so they gave it to me. It was an inventory job by Denny O'Neil under a different name.

I know that [inker] Frank Springer did not care for my pencils, which I can understand, but again that sense of excitement and power was what convinced Bill Mantlo, who was going to be taking over the series, again with Tony Isabella initially plotting. I owe both of my first regular assignments to Tony Isabella. He said, "Let's get George to do it, 'cause at least it's someone who's *willing* to do it." In both cases they were series that no one else wanted, so let's give it to Georgie, he'll draw anything.

The "Man-Wolf series", while never even remotely a monumental seller, Lord knows—it was, after all, canceled a year afterward; did show a rise in sales during my run. Which was the first time that had happened. And "Sons of the Tiger" went from being an occasional backup to one of the most popular features in *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*. So I did have make kind of impact on it. And I must add that was also because of the hungry, very enthusiastic writing that both Bill Mantlo and Dave Kraft were doing. These were their first jobs and they wanted to be able to improve themselves as well. We were a bunch of eager beavers going into strips that nobody else wanted.

That was, in fact, when George Tuska was doing the *Avengers* book. He didn't really want to stay on that book; it wasn't a book he particularly liked - so George Tuska expressed that he would like to leave the book. He would have stayed, had there not been anyone to replace him. Well, that was all Bill Mantlo needed to hear and he contacted me about my interest in *The Avengers*, and I took that on at a time when team books were not the rage. Most artists didn't want to handle them since there were no royalties and you got the same amount of money for drawing a hundred characters as you did for drawing five. So I got the gig it because I wanted to draw a lot of characters, and that started the new wave of work for me.

Sketch: What is it about drawing team books that's so interesting to you?

Pérez: I just loved the group dynamics. I tried to put a psychological spin to it, thinking that since I work all alone, it's one way of maintaining my social skills— having characters interact with each other on paper since I don't have much time to interact with people in flesh and blood. But I think I just enjoy the characters. I've always been the type of person who likes personalities in the books, which is how I gravitated so much to Marvel. So the idea of characters talking to each other, interacting with each other, and always being unique from each other was something that I found not only interesting, but very natural for me. It was not the big struggle that it was for a lot of people.

A lot of people looked at them as a lot of costumes and a lot of characters they had to draw. I felt they were a lot of personalities that I got to draw and choreograph and try to breathe life into. And the costumes were just what they wore so we could pass code. I was very comfortable doing super-hero team books, so I became very valuable as an artist who was quite willing to do the books that no one else wanted.

Sketch: In your early Avengers and others, there was a little more sameness to the characters, but that really changed with your Fantastic Four. I noticed recently when I got a Sons of the Tiger character design sheet that you were starting to differentiate the characters even there. You didn't just have the characters look different because one was Black and one was Asian, and so forth. You actually had attempted at that point in your skill level to do different body types and so forth. So, when do you think there was a turn-around there for you, that you started to realize the need to differentiate?

Pérez: Interestingly, I don't see it that way. One of the things I noticed was that when I started at Marvel, I was trying to draw in the, what was then the Marvel house style— especially on a book like *Fantastic Four* which also had the homogenizing influence of Joe Sinnott. He had been inking the book under several artists at that point starting with Jack Kirby and thus provided the finished stylistic look, or "house style" to *Fantastic Four*. I felt like I was drawing the *FF* characters as icons. I didn't really concentrate as much on them being personalities because I was to busy trying to consciously follow in the style started by Jack and continued by Romita Buscema, Buckler and all those folks that filtered through Joe Sinnott's defining brush. That style defined the *FF* in those days, I think. In the case of the "Sons of the Tiger", I think that because it was a book that no one really cared about at the beginning, I didn't have the enormous magnifying glass staring down at every bit of detail.

My storytelling style was always very much influenced by film, the acting and the casting of characters, so that the idea of doing different body types and different faces was just something that evolved as my natural drawing style. At first I tended to suppress it a little when I was doing the major superheroes at the time, if for no other reason that Marvel had a particular style that needed to be followed. I couldn't go too overboard on *The Avengers* as far as changing their faces because Cap had a certain model style that had to be followed. Ditto with Thor, The Vision, and all these characters. When I became good enough to be able to take those basic body and face styles and adapt them slightly without going too far afield and staying within the model guidelines is when I really started to let my style come through and began developing a reputation for individuality among the characters.

Of course, there was the challenge of characters like Hawkeye and Captain America
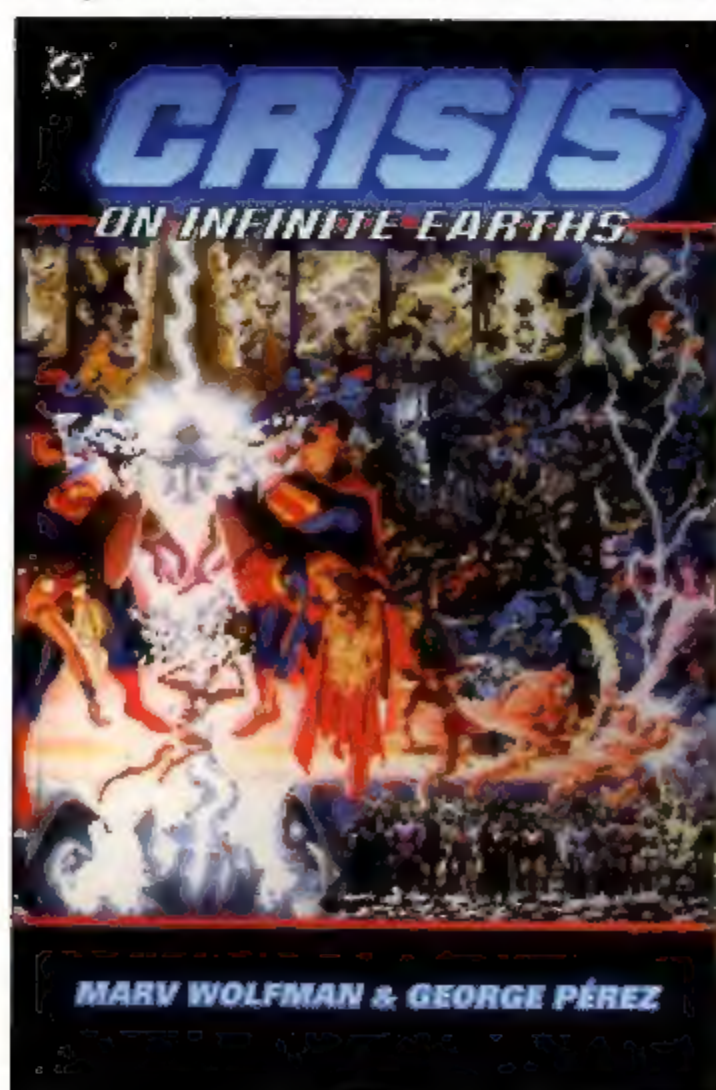
both being blonde men. If I take off their masks, can I make them look different? I tried. At the beginning I don't think I was as successful as most people have given me credit for, in those early issues. And it wasn't until I recently saw those same Sons of the Tiger model sheets that I realize that I *did* try. I think some of those early works, particularly Sons of the Tiger, were probably closer to what would develop into my current style than *Fantastic Four* was or even *The Avengers*. In both cases I was trying to emulate those who came before me,

On *The Avengers* I eventually started adapting them more to my own style, and people started to notice the amount of detail I put in - nuances to the characters that were definitely uniquely my own. And I personally think this was less evident on *Fantastic Four* only because— and I love Joe Sinnott's work, he did a hell of a lot to fix my artwork in those days —there was just a limit to how much I could do on a drawing level without it ending up looking more like Joe's version of the *FF* anyway. So I think my development was more clearly seen on *Avengers*. Which is probably why people are more enamored with my old *Avengers* work than are enamored with my old *Fantastic Four* work. Because I think that was where George Pérez grew up before their eyes, as opposed to George Pérez being just another artist drawing a series the same way as others before him.

Sketch: Well I note, for instance, in your Avengers work that there's almost a radical shift when you started working with Gerry Conway in the # 150's, and then there was this five-month period where you didn't draw the book. And when you came back with issue 160 with Jim Shooter and there was this radical shift, there was suddenly the style that we know now that seemed to come on strong.

Pérez: I think a lot of it is thanks to Jim's desire for me to be more involved with the stories. There became more Pérez personality in *The Avengers*. At the time, Jim, who was pretty new at Marvel, was not as expert with many of the characters. He allowed me more freedom to make the characters who they are. And, of course, I made the characters who they are filtered through my own point of view. It encouraged me to put even more zip into my work.

While I enjoyed working with Gerry, and I loved working with Steve Englehart, I think at the time I still wasn't confident enough in my work to make the grandiose leap that I would when Jim was there. With Gerry, basically he wrote the book. That was pretty much it. I don't think Gerry had as much of himself in it. Steve, definitely, this was Steve Englehart's book. When I came in, Steve was already on a roll. When Jim started doing *The Avengers*, he was the "new kid on the block," so I had a little more heaped on my shoulders, which I genuinely enjoyed, and Jim and I enjoyed the working relationship. But it allowed me to put a little more of "Pérez"

into my work. And with the stories with the Grim Reaper and the Guardians of the Galaxy, and all that stuff that Jim and I did— that's the era I think people remember as the "Pérez 70's Avengers."

Sketch: Were you working this entire time - were they all working - with Marvel-style scripting?

Pérez: Oh yes, that was always the case. The only difference when working with Jim is that Jim's plots were a little looser. He allowed me the freedom. There was freedom to be had on the other plots as well, but since I wasn't asked to co-plot, I didn't feel compelled to try to muscle my way in. I didn't want to step on anyone's toes. I know that there were bits of my storytelling technique that Steve Englehart had trouble with. I do a lot of intercutting when I come to fight scenes. Still do. Steve kind of preferred that sections of a fight finish and end in the same scene as opposed to jumping back and forth. But I always thought that the uniqueness of a fight scene in a group book, is that there's a lot of other fights going on at once and I like to jump around to be able to see what the hell else is going on. I think that made it a little more of a challenge for Steve to write in the style that he was comfortable with. In the case of Jim Shooter, he pretty much let me go nuts and add a lot of the stuff I might have felt a little sheepish about putting in with any other writer earlier in my career because I didn't want to take a chance of antagonizing or confounding the writer.

Sketch: At this point were you working in the offices or were you working at home?

Pérez: I've always worked at home. I've never worked at the office. The one advantage in those days was that I lived in New York. I would visit the offices once or sometimes even twice a week since it was just a twenty-minute subway ride for me. Things changed after a while, and of course now I don't live anywhere near the offices. Even CrossGen is a two-and-a-half-hour drive for me. In those early New York days I went in and I made photocopies of my own work in the Marvel offices. I liked getting feedback on the artwork, people looking at the artwork and hoping that they'd like it. And I liked talking to the writers, since most of the writers were also going in around the same day, usually payday. And I would get to meet other professionals, some of the veterans whom I idolized. That was all the excuse I needed to go into the offices.

Sketch: What was your Marvel nickname?

Pérez: "Pacesetter." That was given to me by David Kraft during my "Man-Wolf" days. I've used it from time to time since then, including when I was doing mail-order sketches using "Pacesetter Productions" as a business name. I don't know why he chose it. I like to think it was because I knew how to pace a story. But, Lord knows, he might have just thought, "Well, I got something with
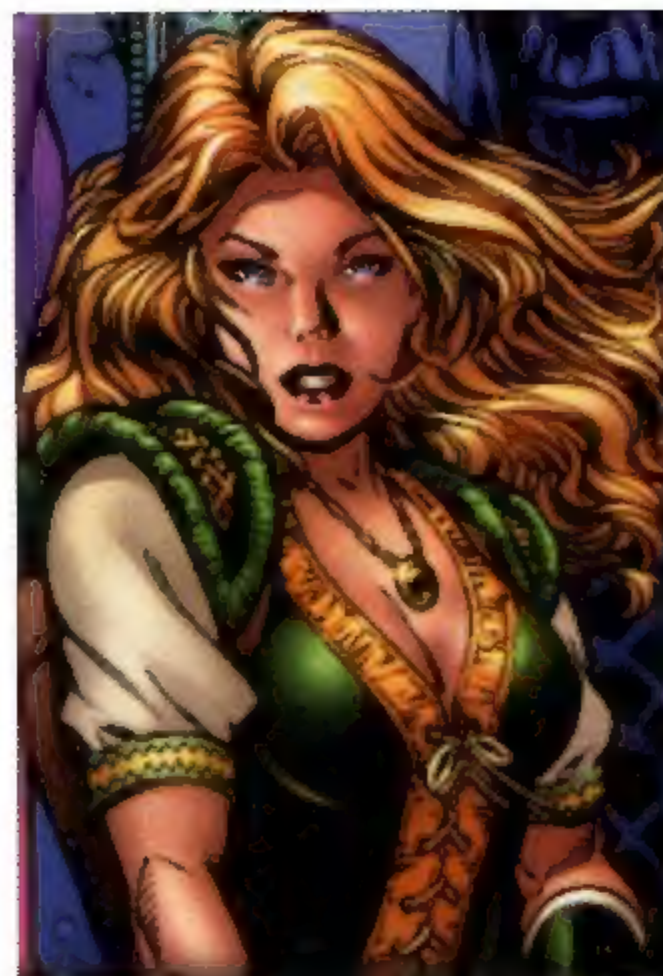
'P' that I could use." But that's the nickname, and David Kraft is responsible for that one.

Sketch: I always took that to mean that you were fast.

Pérez: At the time I probably was. I think about how many books I was doing those days. At one point three-and-a-half books a month! Obviously, I went from Pacesetter to Pacemaker {laughs}. I eventually had to slow down - I could have killed myself at that rate. For whatever reason, I don't ever think I really asked Dave why he chose it. I just thought, "My God, it's cool."

Sketch: Now on your Avengers work there, as I recall, that's when your first costume designs started coming in, wasn't it?

Pérez: I think you're probably right.

Sketch: Like Taskmaster, I think, was one of the first times you actually designed somebody from a....

Pérez: As far as a character having any long lasting value, anyway. In *Fantastic Four* there might have been a character here or there, but none of them became regular, recurring villains. Taskmaster would be one of the early ones. I designed the White Tiger, but let's face it; it was a guy in a leotard with sandals. Hardly a major costuming achievement, and that was based on a suggestion from Bill Mantlo. Yeah, I would

guess the Taskmaster would be the first.

As many costumes as I've designed, one of the things I have to get a little past, even to this day, is designing costumes that only I would like to draw. I find that the costumes I like to draw have a lot of little extra doo-dads, slightly asymmetrical, and are so detailed that most other artists, the second they get a chance to handle that character regularly, will simplify the costume.

Sketch: We'll jump ahead a little bit and discuss some of that element. For instance, I know with Starfire, from The New Titans, that was an issue, you had one armband on one side and so forth. And I know other characters, Jericho and your Zatanna redesign in Justice League were all things that had huge amounts of elements to them, and yet, if you looked at them, they aren't symmetrical.

Pérez: Some were more symmetrical than others. Zatanna was perfectly symmetrical. Sometimes I would use angles, which does give a slight sense of asymmetry. I guess it's more of the extra doo-dads that might make something a little heavier or busier on one side if a person's costume like a holster, sword, and all these other things on one side or the other.

As I look at Zatanna's costume, Zatanna was just like a stylized tuxedo since I didn't want to go too far afield. But then I would

put that little doo-dad in her hair, which to this day I don't understand why I did that. Having my druthers now I'd have gotten rid of that right away. Sometimes I feel like, "Oh, it looks too simple." So I'll add things on when I should know that enough is enough. I've got to learn to say "enough."

Even Kory's (Starfire) costume is basically an iron bikini, and slightly asymmetrical because she had the armband on one arm. Then I add the pebbling on the collar, to make it even more complicated than it actually is. Otherwise it's a very simple costume — but I just have to add those little extra details. Cyborg's costume, which in its asymmetrically is mostly based on Deathlok the Demolisher, with half a face and a metal plate for the other half. He was another example of where I could have done a much simpler job on that. I ended up drawing a costume with a lot of lines, a lot of ellipsis, for the joint caps and such.

One of my favorite stories was when Walter Simonson drew the *X-Men/Titans* books, back in the 1980's. According to Walter, they made sure to have Cyborg - who was supposed to be one of the strongest of the Titans - beaten early, so he didn't have to draw that damn costume over and over again. 'Cause all those lines drove him crazy! And I've gotten that comment from a lot of people who had to draw characters I've designed. "Why did I draw those scales on Jericho's costume?" There seemed to be no reason other than that George just wanted to fill in space.

Sketch: So in terms of designing characters, for people who are coming into the industry, or people who are working in it, what's the secret for designing a good character that's not going to be too hard to draw?

Pérez: Well, you can never look at it simply as a character that's too hard to draw. You have to look at it as a character with a costume that reflects the character. Plus—and this is something that a lot of artists forget or don't think through—you have to imagine *moving* in that costume. There is a certain amount of exaggeration that we do in comics. But there are costumes that people would put so many elements on their figures - and I've been guilty of it, and I do try to be aware of it - like shoulder pads and arm guards or things on the legs, on the waist, anywhere on the body that will not allow the characters to move. When the arms and shoulders are so stocked with extra pieces of metal and what have you the reality is that the character's arm can't move forward unless you basically re-draw every single element differently to account for that movement. I find that disregard for continuity maddening, although even some of the best artists in the industry have shrugged it off as artistic license. And they may be right. It's just my own little quibble.

But, since this is my interview I'll follow through by saying that one of the things I feel that aspiring artists have to be careful with, at least until you've gotten good enough to get away with such stylistic quirks—

drawing a really, really complex costume with a lot of stuff on it. If you do want to draw something complex try to at least design the costume from different positions and angles to see if the character can move without looking like it's wearing a different costume with every movement.

Of course, this is comics, this is make-believe, and all the laws of physics can be explained away with what Marv Wolfman used to call "magic fairy dust", but there's got to be a point where you at least should try to think in three dimensions.

And remember, in most cases, these are costumes, these aren't robots. Iron Man is a man inside a suit of armor. A lot of people draw him as if he's a robot. It may look cool, but I think it robs the character of his humanity.

Of course, there are certain fantasy elements that will never change. Why do almost all super-heroines wear high heels? Hey, it's because men are drawing these super-heroines, and I'm a man, I freely admit it. When I did *Wonder Woman* I definitely thought that, well, for her character, she wouldn't wear high heels, it doesn't make any sense for the character. That's what I mean by a costume reflecting the characters. (But privately, hey, I'd prefer Diana in stilettos six inches high any day.)

One of the things that I'd like to do more which is not as common - and I don't recommend it to people, is drawing prints on character's clothing. After all real people wear plaids, paisley— people wear multi-prints, they wear T-shirts with designs on them; that's reality. And if you want to draw people realistically, well you draw that type of thing. Of course, that means you're stuck drawing that in every single panel that character appears in.

Computers can make that a little easier now, but comics still require some simplification and streamlining. I guess I do tend to get a bit anal about detail sometimes, but that's part of what people like about my work— and what some people don't like about my work. I found the happy medium now, thanks to computers, because a computer will add all that extra stuff in color and it looks less cluttered when it's not drawn with a black line. At least, it works for me.

Sketch: Let's go back to your last days at Marvel and your beginning days at DC. Why did you make the switch?

Pérez: Oh, the last days at Marvel... I had intended on staying on, working at both companies. At that point I was on *The Avengers*, I was on *Justice League*, and I was just starting on *Teen Titans*. It soon became obvious that because of my work load, and certain personal difficulties — I had just gone through a divorce at that point —I could not keep up that kind of schedule. As much as I thought I could, of course, there was no way I could handle it.

In the case of the *Justice League*, I had just gotten on the book. In the case of *Titans*,

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well, I was just starting that book as a whole totally new project. The only book that I could sacrifice of the three was *The Avengers* since it was the one book that I had already been working on for some time so that it wouldn't be as much of a betrayal to leave that book. Ironically, and unfortunately, it was my only Marvel book.

So, I ended up working solely at DC at that point, only because of the fact that the Marvel book was the only one that was dispensable for me at that point. It was not a deliberate desire to work only at DC Comics. That, unfortunately, came later. I was already a few years into *The New Teen Titans*, and had started the *Justice League/Avengers* book. And due to the political pissing contest that *that* brought, I had a particular grudge with the editorship at Marvel and decided that, in my mind—whether I was right or wrong is now irrelevant— the editorship at Marvel helped kill that project, and I felt that I didn't want to work there anymore. I just didn't feel confident in the editorial judgment over at Marvel at that time. I would sign an exclusive contract with DC within a couple of months and thus became a DC artist exclusively for five years. And during the course of that time I had a very, very wonderful surge of popularity and success. There was always regret that there was bitterness in why I was doing all that work solely at DC.

Sketch: Let's talk a little bit about when you were working for both companies, it was actually a situation that, to my recollection at this moment, that rarely happened. That someone's drawing books, major team books, at least...

Pérez: It used to be rare. Not as rare anymore, but it wasn't unprecedented. Neal Adams was doing DC books the same time he was doing the X-Men over at Marvel. The fact that I was doing *team* books was just that they happened to be team books.

Sketch: Ok, so Neal opened that door before most artists did....

Pérez: Before, most artists would use pen names when they were working at another company. Neal went in and, hell, he was Neal Adams. That was the name he used. He didn't try to hide, or felt he needed to hide, behind a pen name. So I think it was Neal who really, really opened up the door. What was Marvel or DC going to do, fire him? He was way too popular - and too damn good. So I benefited from that.

For the brief time I was doing books at both Marvel and DC all they cared about was my being able to meet a deadline. I'm sure DC wanted me to work solely for them. Marvel wanted me to work solely for them, but there was nothing they really could do. It would be like Marvel saying, "Well George, sorry you can't work on *The Avengers* if you're going to work on those DC books," because then they might have felt that *The Avengers* might suffer. And again, this was

before royalties. Not as many people wanted to draw the team books. So I never found any real problem. In fact, the one problem I found in my mind was the idea of "auditioning," since I was going to DC and I was sure that there were probably people there that had no idea who I was, or didn't know whether I could handle a DC style book. So the idea of auditioning and asking things like, "What is the page rate?" was new to me. Once I got into Marvel, I never even had to ask for a raise, I *received* raises without ever asking for them. Stan Lee gave me my first.

As it turned out that was moot, since I was *asked* to work at DC by Marv Wolfman and Len Wien, who'd both gone over there. So it wasn't like I had to prove myself. No! They were opening the gates for me. If I wanted to go and work there, they had projects waiting for me. I tended to over-worry, about nothing, there.

Sketch: So how did New Teen Titans come about? You were doing work on Justice League, which came about, almost not by accident, but by death.

Pérez: Well, when I went to DC I was offered doing the new book *The New Teen Titans*. And since I had no real confidence that that book was going to do well, my proviso for going and doing *Teen Titans* was that I get to do a few issues of *Justice League*, even though I thought it would be fill-ins and may not be appearing for quite a while since Dick Dillin had an almost unbroken streak on that book. But I wanted to do *Justice League* - somehow. So they agreed.

After that agreement is ironically and tragically when the news came of Dick Dillin's death. And then I was offered, not just as a fill-in, but to actually draw *Justice League* as the regular artist. Which was my dream although that wasn't how I wanted to realize it. And it was an immense surprise to me, as it must have been to a lot of people in the industry, when *The New Teen Titans* succeeded to the degree that it did. To the point that I gave up *Justice League* in order to dedicate my time to *Titans*. It was a successful book that was born of the marriage of Marv Wolfman and myself. And *Justice League* was a lot of fun; I loved drawing the books. But it didn't give me the satisfaction, as it turned out, that *Titans* would. The rest is history.

Sketch: When you went to DC, that was the first time working with full scripts wasn't it?

Pérez: No, actually I did work from full scripts very early on. My first "Sons of the Tiger" script. Since it was an inventory job it was a full script. But, yes, for the most part, I did not work from full scripts. *Justice League* was the first full script I was given since then because that was the way Dick Dillin worked. And all these scripts were done and stockpiled. Gerry Conway was very much ahead of schedule on the books, so he had about three or four scripts that were ready for Dick Dillin.

Page from the original JLA/Avengers crossover.
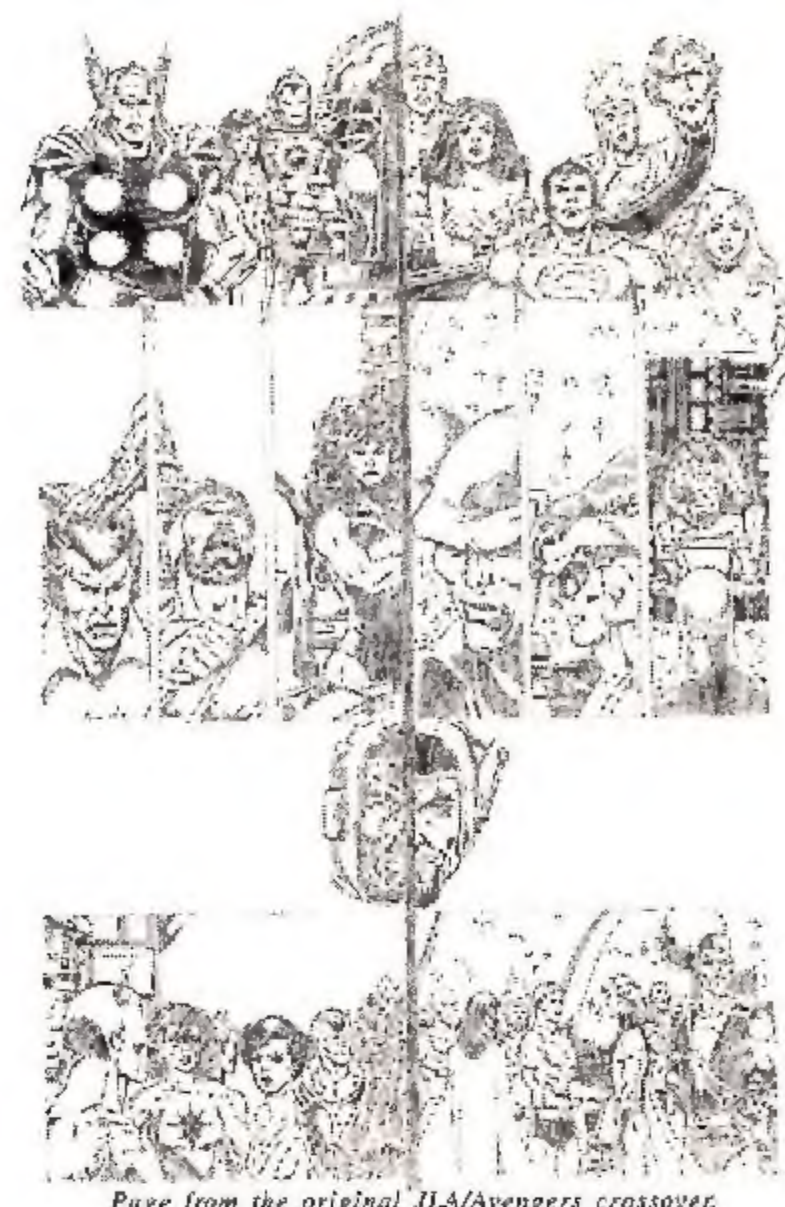
Page from the original JLA/Avengers crossover.

So, of course, I was working on Gerry's full scripts which contained suggestions for layouts that played to Dick Dillin's strengths. There were some adjustments that I made as I went along. Without changing dialogue, I just reworked the pacing based on how I laid a page out, how many panels I would put on that page, the camera angles, etc. And it was an interesting challenge and one that I actually welcomed a few times later on in my career because it's a great bit of discipline. When you are told what the characters are saying, you are now limited to what they can do based on the dialogue in the piece. So you become more of an actual director of a drama, wherein you're taking the script as bible and having the characters interpret those lines like actors in a play.

If I had any problem or disagreement with dialogue, rather than change it, I can tweak the line's meaning by the expression on the character's face or the way their body language expresses the thought. So it was a nice bit, because what was once a straightforward sentence can be read as sarcasm if I have the character "acting" the way I want them to. So actually, I kind of enjoyed that. I wouldn't want it as a regular diet because I don't think it plays to my strengths, but it was a good exercise for me.

Sketch: For people who are new, or who are working in comics right now, what do you

think of the strengths of plot versus full script styles?

Pérez: The real strength in working from a plot, from my way of thinking, is the opportunity to put in more of the artist's own personality. And, as a storyteller, you're there to try to convey as much information on the page not only to the reader, but also to your writer, since the writer will not be dialoging until after you've drawn the page. You should draw as much information as you can to make the story fold out naturally and logically, almost like a storyboard or a silent film. That way, you would have actually done more to make the writer's work easier. Working from a plot challenges you to drive the direction of the story more.

If you're a good storyteller, you're on your way to finding a perfect marriage, or synergy, between yourself and a writer, especially if that writer also understands that, "Okay, you've done your job, now I'll do my job. Now my job is to put personality, motivation, subtleties that cannot be expressed in action, into the page." If he then starts explaining what is already clear in what you've drawn, he is a bad writer.

If you can show the page to someone, not even necessarily the writer, and they can make out the basics of what's going on, where point A leads to point B, C, etc., then you've just become a true comic book artist. If you're given a plot where you've successfully fulfilled the job of pacing, of setting up mood, setting up action, and showing the aftermath of that action— when you're able to do that, then when you work on a full script, you're going to be way ahead of the game. Then you can handle anything.

There are some who cannot work unless the writer - and the writer will have to have a good visual sense - lays it out for them. "This is what I want here, this is what I want there, I want this angle, this angle here, I want this type of set-up on this panel, etc." Those artists may be good draftsmen, but they may not necessarily be the best storytellers. However, as long as one of the creative team understands visual, sequential storytelling, then the results can be just as rewarding. If neither knows how to do it, it's pretty much pictures and words duking it out for attention.

The Marvel Style, as it's called, (which is

actually a misnomer, because this style of plotting has existed in various forms before Marvel) is a way for an artist/storyteller to shine a bit brighter. I think that is one of my strengths throughout my career. In the early years, when my graphics were nothing to write home about, it was my natural gift for storytelling that got me through. I don't know how quickly I would have been able to cultivate that natural ability or how far I would have progressed as a storyteller if I had worked full script all those early year with somebody else doing the thinking for me.

Sketch: Right. I always use the example of the X-Men books, with Chris Claremont - his work with John Byrne or Paul Smith, are looked at as some of the hallmarks of his best of the run on the early X-Men. And you look at the two of the artists and both of them have gone on and been major storytellers on their own. And I think, as you were saying, probably that was...?

Pérez: Symbiotic relationship. Symbiosis.

Sketch: Yeah, where they got the two of them working. One is starting the story, then the artist is coming along and working out the logistics and the art. And then they come back in and dialogue over that. Whereas, I feel sometimes Claremont's later work where he's been a little more in control, or it's been more dialogue driven, suddenly the story isn't quite as strong. He's not working with the strongest storyteller, maybe.

Pérez: Well, in some cases that is true, because you become reliant on your partner, who will carry through certain things. And of course, the more the partner gets to do, as in working from a plot, the more of that person's personality comes through in the finished work. And that personality will always be absent with the absence of that one party. When Marv writes for another artist, it's never going to be like the way he wrote with me, especially on a book like *The Titans*. I was deeply involved in the plotting of that book and how the characters behaved through the way I drew them and with Marv then adding the dialogue based on that.

My *Wonder Woman* does not read like *The Titans* because I'm absent Marv Wolfman's contribution. So for better or for ill, that is the way I work on my own. And when I work with other artists, you will see different dynamics. Sometimes I would have to overcompensate in dialogue because the storytelling may be weak. Or maybe have to explain something because it wasn't what I originally would have done visually.

But the one good thing about working that way; I would never have become the writer or even the storyteller I am today if the relationship with Marv Wolfman hadn't born fruit for both of us. We both learned a lot. I think I can work with other people better than I would have had I never worked with Marv, because I learned so much from him. And I think that Marv did as well, working with me. I'd like to think that when he writes a

plot there are certain things he may have learned from me about what might work visually, and suggest that to another artist and see if he can catch the magic in a bottle one more time. I think we both ended up becoming better, and we learned a lot from each other, by having this close, symbiotic relationship - while it can never be repeated, we carried elements of it throughout our future work.

Sketch: Well, one thing I wonder about that, with the artist and writer team there, for instance I know Marv has some art background. Jim Shooter has some art background. As a comic book writer, I have a graphics design degree. I don't like doing art anymore, but I know it informs the way I write a script. And oftentimes, if I write full script, I've had certain artists who love it and other artist who really rebel against it. They don't want to be controlled. Did you ever find yourself in that position, where you felt you were being controlled by the script?

Pérez: Oh yes. There were times when I would get the full scripts from Gerry on *Justice League* that I would rebel, " That's not the way I see it being handled, that's not the pacing I like." For instance, I'm of the school that likes to end the page at a turning point. When you turn the page, something new has happened or it's a natural break; as opposed to a break in the action or a change of scene happening in the middle of a page which is what some other people prefer. So if the writer gives me something and says, "Okay, and then this person reacts here, then we cut to a totally different change of scene" - a quick cut as it might be called in a movie- I would counter with, "Let me see if I can repace this in order to have that action end at the end of the page start the new sequence on the next." That is simply the way I like to do it. It doesn't make me or the writer right or wrong. The one thing which is first and foremost, whether working full script or plot, is remembering that the story is the most important thing. If I have to jeopardize a scene that happens before the cut just to fit the cut, then I don't make the change. Then the story would be compromised. If there's an important element, you put your ego in the rear of the bus and drive on with what the plot is at that point. Otherwise you're just letting yourself become more important than the story.

That's the touchy part of working in any artistic medium; knowing when your artistic ego *has* to be pulled back. This is a collaborative effort. And if you have respect for the writer's work at all you have to put yourself in his or her place: "Well, if I were the writer, and the artist made this relatively arbitrary change, I might get a little ticked off." Try to respect the other person's ability and contribution. And if you have any major change you feel you need to make, *contact* the writer. Usually you can talk anything out. And the other guy might convince you that you're wrong.

There is a natural form of rebelling because, as artists, we tend to not take criticism well and not see the other person's point of view as valid. But when you've worked as long as I have at this business, and as long as you keep the story first and foremost, you've got the best handle on any working situation. I have not had any book that I couldn't work through, even when I reach what John Byrne once called "The Arghh! Moment" - when you read something and say, "Arghh!" Because the writer has written something that just seems so incredibly wrong to you. Then it's time to discuss it with the writer... and if that doesn't work, finding a way of, let's say, slipping in that little visual twist that kind of forces the writer to compromise a bit for fear that he's going to go totally against what you've just drawn and work from there.

Sketch: Do you have any famous examples of an Arghh! Moment?

Pérez: Oh, the most famous one for me wasn't a bad story idea, but a simple mistake. It happened with *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. Marv Wolfman, at that point, was so overworked and overwhelmed by it, at least the way I viewed it. Marv was at the peak of his fame and influence and was almost godlike to many of the guys at DC Comics. But, to be clear on this, that was simply a perception, not a reflection of Marv's personality. Marv, himself, was always the most accessible person you could ever work with. So, when he would make a mistake some people would kind of let it slide, because they didn't want to criticize Marv Wolfman. At this point I wasn't involved in the plotting of *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, and there was a scene in the next issue's plot where a character is killed while somebody was watching. Unfortunately, that character had just been killed the issue before. So, suddenly he was alive, and then dies again.

And I realized no one was paying attention. And of course I went, "Arghh! What's going on here?" My way of solving that one was calling up Marv, saying, "You just killed off a character again," and becoming a co-plotter on that book so that I would provide another set of eyes and ears to keep a watch on the story. That was the only real Arghh! Moment for me. . That's the only real one that knocked me for a loop because there was no way I could draw around it. I wish I could remember which issue that was, but I remember reading that and I couldn't believe it (laughter). I said, " This makes no sense to me. We've lost all control."

I've been very fortunate. Even if I disagree with a character's motivation or depiction I try not to get too worked up about it. But I do have the freedom now, being a quote - unquote "star" in this industry, of being able to get away with slight changes and, as long as I have a logical reason and am able to work it out with the writer. He may disagree with me too, but then he has the option of doing some slight modification in the writing to find that happy middle ground.

Sketch: Before we get to Crisis let's get back to Titans here for a moment. The New Teen Titans was the first book actually, wasn't it, that you started co-plotting with Marv?

Pérez: At Marv's encouragement. Although technically, as I said before, I was co-plotting with Jim Shooter on *Avengers* as well, and given a little more freedom on other books, but not as much. *Titans* was the first book where I received *credit* as co-plotter Many artists were already co-plotting other books; Jack Kirby and Stan Lee are very good examples of that. But Marv - and this is a testament to Marv as both a human being and professional - insisted that with my, constant and extensive input on the book, that I should be given co-plotting credit. And, again as a testament to Marv Wolfman, he insisted I get co-plotting *pay*, at a time when there was no co-plotting pay structure at either of the companies. So Marv would get paid, and pay me out of his share, out of his pocket, until they made the necessary bookkeeping changes. Now the industry has established a co-plotting/co-scripting voucher system where they can break the payments in half, in quarters, or whatever needs to be done. But Marv did it before there ever was such a system. So he encouraged me even more by making me believe that my input was of worth - of worth financially as well as creatively. *Titans* was the first co-plotting job I got where I actually received credit for it.

Sketch: That was also the period where you started fairly regularly inking your own work. I don't recall ever seeing any work where you were practicing your inking, so how did you...

Pérez: Oh, you look at any of my early covers you'll see where I was practicing my inking. Even my early *Titans* covers; I was using markers, I was using all the wrong tools. Actually, there's no such thing as the "wrong tools"; I just didn't know how to use them well. I wanted a little more control in the only arena available to me due to my limitations as far as speed was concerned. I could ink covers. I couldn't ink interiors; I would never be able to maintain a monthly title that way. So covers became my inking domain of choice.

I had wanted to do so at Marvel but only inked, at that point, one cover, which was a *Fantastic Four* (#194) cover; one of the rare times I actually had somebody else ink my backgrounds. It had Diablo and the Thing on it, and Michael Higgins actually inked the backgrounds. But it wasn't until *The New Teen Titans #2* that I started having regular cover inking assignments. In that case I was the artist and co-creator on the Titans. I was able to kind of *push* my way into that one, even though I was not very good. But, as in everything, I needed to start somewhere.

One of the great things in my career that I've enjoyed, for a man who's had no art training, and thus no other venue in which to practice, I got the best art training while I was being *paid*. So I learned more about inking

as I started inking, making mistakes, learning what other things would work, other inkers coming to me and saying, "Why don't you try this? Why don't you work this way?" And I would get better, I would get more proficient, and I would get *paid*. What a great job!

Ditto with learning anatomy, learning perspective, learning other means of telling a story, spotting blacks All these little elements, technical elements, I was learning "on the job." So people were watching me make mistakes - and still buying my books, thankfully - and I became a better artist, hopefully, in front of their eyes.

Sketch: At this point in your career, with Crisis, you basically slowed down. You went from drawing three-and-a-half books a month to then drawing three, to two...

Pérez: And then finally just the one - and struggling on that one sometimes.

Sketch: Right. What happened?

Pérez: I needed to learn. Despite the great benefit or luck of learning as I went and getting paid for it, there was a realization that I could only go so far without actually sitting down and really, really studying my craft. I may get suggestions from other professionals, but that doesn't replace sitting down and bettering yourself. So, I actually decided that I needed to slow down in order to learn. I just couldn't fake everything. If I wanted to have a career of any lasting value I would have to start to learn how to draw

As much as I had success with the exaggerated Kirbyesque style at Marvel, I wanted to get back a little to more to the other art styles that originally influenced me. A little more to the quiet, realistic, little more subtle style like Curt Swan, whom I mentioned before, and others like Neal Adams. And for that I would actually have to sit down, start getting reference books, relearn a bit more about anatomy, study folds in clothing. If I'm going to be drawing a building get a book on architecture; try to understand that a little more And I just started putting more

time into my work. Of course, the downside of that was that I had to slow down to the point that I could no longer produce the quantity of work that I was producing. But I was hoping to replace that with at least greater quality in what work did come out.

Interestingly enough, it was the series *Logan's Run*, the adaptation of the film, that started me on that path. It was the first book wherein I had to use photo references *intensively* without - and this is a strange happenstance - without being able to draw the likenesses of the actors. Because of that I was able to concentrate on the background, the scenery. The characters I could already draw without having to worry about making them look like anyone in particular. So, I was drawing generic characters but now I was starting to learn how to draw backgrounds that were evocative or representative of real backgrounds that had been created for the movie itself. And I found that I really enjoyed that challenge. So, it started affecting my work. I started developing a reference library. More and more I became determined to do a better job.

One of the flaws that I found in my work is that everyone tended to look very big and bulky. There was no one who was actually normal looking. If I were drawing Bruce Banner he would look as muscular as Captain America; it's the Hulk that would make him look puny by comparison. Then I realized, no, here should be a real sense of smallness, of leanness to some characters, if only for variety's sake. *The Titans* probably is the greatest example of how my style developed in that way. When you look at the earliest *Titans* you can see my heavy Marvel influences. The men are almost of uniform height, as are the women. They're all built pretty much the same way.

I got more into drawing characters realistically, which I said I started with *Logan's Run*, but really didn't get into it until *Titans*. Since the characters were supposed to be teenagers, it gave me the excuse I needed to scale the muscles down a bit. And the characters started became more unique in body style. I started *thinking* more. I started thinking about the fact that if a person is super fast, as Kid Flash was, he burns calories like crazy. So he should not be bulky, he should

have almost more like a ballet dancer's body, with a little more muscle in order not to look scrawny-like in comic book terms. And I just started slowing down in order to pay attention to what I'm doing.

As much as I probably could earn a better living if I didn't put quite as much thinking or concentrate so much on the details of a given page, I don't think I would have had as strong a career or as long lived a career if I didn't do that. I would have been just another person "churning it out" as opposed to a person whose commitment to his craft is evident on the page. And hopefully the exuberance and the excitement that I feel when doing it is contagious so that the person picking up the book gets caught up in the same excitement as well. But, yeah, boy, did that slow me down.

Sketch: When you talked about building a reference library, I think this is also when you started going to life drawing classes, wasn't it?

Pérez: I never went to a life drawing class. I picked up books. With my kind of schedule, I didn't have time to go out to classes so I brought them in via books. So I would study books like [Burne Hogarth's] *Dynamic Anatomy* which Rich Buckler gave me years ago as well as other reference books. You know, photographs of people in motion. Horses, cars, cityscapes, landscapes—even things that I had not yet drawn but tried to have a reference for in case I needed it in the future. And that became my classroom. I would get as much reference as I could. If I'm drawing New York City, let's draw it to look as much like New York City as I can.

One of the reasons *Wonder Woman* was set in Boston was because the original writer, Greg Potter, was from that area. He wanted Wonder Woman there because he knew the area. But when I took over the writing, there was no reason for her to be in Boston now. Except for the fact that it gave me a challenge. I had to draw a real city! It meant going to references; making sure that I got at least the feeling of Boston in there. And thus, I thought I became a better artist for doing that and the series developed a sense of verisimilitude it might have lacked otherwise.

My reference library right now is three overflowing five-tier bookshelves. I have to redesign this studio to get another set of bookshelves up now; I've run out of space here. The internet now provides a lot of references as well that you can print up. I had to develop my own little art school here. Looking here, I've got books on bridges, books on wrinkles on clothing, cutouts from magazines. I think Wally Wood used to have this incredible reference file that he use to dig in. Now mine is not quite as expansive as Wally's, but it is of the same principle that I try to have books on just about anything. My wife was, today, just looking at an English Heritage book. And it had some scenes of some archers in an article dealing with longbows. I said, "Can I copy that?" I had

two new characters to draw who use longbows. So, you get references where you can.

Sketch: Well, I think that's an important point to make with new artists. I know in one script that I wrote, I had the artist draw a school bus. And they didn't know how to draw a school bus and had to go out and get reference for that.

Pérez: Oh, I remember in doing a story which I co-plotted, I did it to myself. It was for the never-printed Titans graphic novel *Games*. There was a scene where a school bus was *pivotal*. So I got in my car, drove around the area and photographed school buses that I saw parked. I went out during the time when no school buses were going to be running and photographed them, and sketched them, in order to have reference on school buses. It has happened many a time that despite the large library I try to keep, I will get a plot, and it's the one thing I don't have reference for, or maybe just not at the angle I need to draw it. So despite all the books, I would still have to go to the bookstores to buy a book that may have the *one* photograph I need.

Sometimes I'd border on being a little anal about it. Sometimes you can't just fake it. I find, like, for every Superman, there's Clark Kent. The man in the red and blue tights and cape, he's supposed to be the fantasy figure. Clark Kent is our link to reality. And I like to keep that reality there because then it gives something for a Superhero to be super-heroic against. Then you can see the differences between them. Otherwise, if everyone was bigger than life, there is no real uniqueness to being "super" in any way.

Sketch: Well, speaking of everyone bigger than life, that kind of describes Crisis on Infinite Earths. Which, to my mind, as an artist would be both a dream project and the ultimate nightmare - because you have to draw literally thousands of different characters.

Pérez: Well actually, literally half a thousand - at least *recognizable* characters. As in most "dream projects" for me, I create Frankensteins more often that not. My dreams become monsters very easily because I know what I want to do is going to be a lot of fun to do. But the actual physical part of drawing, the actual putting of hand and pencil to paper, is time consuming. It's a strain. Okay, I want to draw the hundredth character, but I still gotta draw the first one - and *then* the second one. I mean, you can't just draw all one hundred of them in one fell swoop. The grandest plans still come down to the fact that you have to start with point one. The dream does not come out full-blown. You always have to start with the first line that you put on the paper.

Sometimes I am amazed that I have survived as long, and I still have the enthusiasm I have, considering I've punished my poor self more than I probably ever should have. And now I've given license to any

writer who writes a script knowing that I'm going to be drawing it, to punish me even more. They say, "Oh well, let's play to George's strengths. Panel 'A': crowd." I've experienced it where writers say, "Ooh, I get to work with George Pérez. He's not afraid of anything!" George is never going to get a rest now.

Sketch: Well my understanding is that with JLA/Avengers, the new project that you're working on; that you're actually kind of, in many ways, planning to top Crisis in terms of amount of characters, and interaction and so forth.

Pérez: Well I know that the first issue has well over sixty characters so far. It doesn't hurt that in one panel I get to draw the...Oh, gosh, I just forgot their name Those Legion-like characters that Marvel did in *X-Men*

Sketch: The Imperial Guard.
Pérez: The Imperial Guard, yes. In one of the panels the Imperial Guard are fighting another character. So, well then, I have to draw every Imperial Guard in this one panel... 'cause it's my job So, of course, I create my monsters there. If I can, and if the story - like in the case of the Imperial Guard — calls for it, I would love to be able to break my five-hundred-plus-record that I set on *Crisis*. But, as Mike Carlin has said, "George is the only person he [Carlin] knows in the industry who just loves drawing crowds." And, in the case of *JLA/Avengers*, as most people know, there's twenty years of anticipation that I'm trying to live up to, and a lot of it to myself.

Sketch: A lot of foreplay on that one.
Pérez: Oh, yes. A lot of foreplay and I gotta hope there's real satisfying sex with this one, boy. And I see this as my valedictory address as far as super-heroes are concerned. Once this book is out, once it has been collected and hopefully released as trade paperbacks and everything else, it will mark thirty years that I will have dedicated to drawing super-heroes. And I think that's a nice way of ending a long run and starting to move on to other genres. I don't know what else I could do after *JLA/Avengers* that would not be a retread of stuff I've done before — at least in the super-hero game

Sketch: Well with Wonder Woman you were actually doing things that you hadn't done before in that you were working with a solo character, a woman, and you ended up being writer and artists on that and so forth. Do you want to talk a little bit about that?
Pérez: Well, *Wonder Woman* was actually not that much of change even though it revolved around a solo central character. Hey, I had an island full of Amazons that I constantly was using. I created a large supporting cast; I may as well call it a group book. But it was fantasy, and thanks to the support of editor Karen Berger, I was allowed to do a fantasy type series within a super-

hero genre. And that's probably what I enjoyed so much about it. It was a character that allowed for more fantasy storytelling. It was also more personality driven, there was more introspection, and I still had a mixture of action tossed in there.

I was encouraged to write sometime back - by Marv Wolfman again   and when it became obvious by issue two that the series was definitely leaning toward my creative vision, Greg decided to leave the book. That book was probably more of a manifestation of George Pérez's personality than any other project I had done before. A lot of my sensibilities appeared there, and a lot of what I learned from working with Marv Wolfman was shown in those pages. I happened to love characterization in books. I think that's why I fell in love with books - the Stan Lee jobs - in the 1960's. So I tend to write more into personality stories, those are usually my favorites.

Even on *Titans*, the personality stories like "Who Is Donna Troy?" and "A Day in the Lives ..." are the stories that stand out in my mind. Those are the ones I enjoyed the most. Drawing action is quite easy for me Drawing subtle interaction is more of a challenge, and if you do that right, you make the book more interesting. You've accomplished something!

I'm most grateful that my time on *Wonder Woman*, even more so than on *Titans*, garnered a large female following for my work; which is not that easy in the world of mainstream comic books. The greatest compliment I received in working on *Wonder Woman* and the fantasy genre was by one woman who actually read the book, and was surprised that a *man* had written it That made me feel quite proud.

In the case of *Wonder Woman*, and why I hadn't taken on the mantle of writer/artist since then to any major degree, it's that I had something to say with *Wonder Woman*. Maybe it's the fact that she was a female character that made her interesting to me. I could explore areas of my own personality that I wouldn't have been able to explore before.   And, unlike a lot of my contemporaries who start writing solely for themselves, I prefer working with other writers for the most part. They will challenge me to do things that I may not have thought of doing before. It just makes for greater challenges.

I can't express my thankfulness to Karen Berger, in particular, for my doing *Wonder Woman*, because she never was intimidated by my fame. And in my first issue as a writer, she had me totally rewrite the first ten pages, taking the chance - as an editor does when dealing with temperamental artists - of me saying, "Who are you to tell me how to write?" Well, she was my *editor*. And she did a damn good job. My next ten pages were a lot better than my first ten pages. And I became a better writer - thanks to her.

Sketch: Right. So you're definitely one that says no matter how good you think you

are, somebody might be able to improve you if you listen to them.
Pérez: And the fact that your best work should always be your *next* work, and don't believe all the hype about yourself.

Sketch: One of the things about Wonder Woman that we haven't touched on yet is from actually the very beginning of your career, you were influenced by the fact that you're a minority. With White Tiger you were drawing a Puerto Rican super-hero, and you have African-Americans and Asian-Americans in your work.
Pérez: Strangely enough, that's actually more of a stereotype than anything else. Despite being Puerto Rican by birth, I was more influenced by television and the movies. I had very little actual cultural involvement in my own background when I was growing up. I was raised in a very poor neighborhood. Unfortunately a lot of my peers were street kids who got into trouble, and art, movies, television and fantasy were my refuge from that kind of existence. I knew how to draw convincing looking Latinos and Blacks and all the others, of course, because I saw them all my life. I could look in the mirror and draw Latino. But I also had no trouble drawing the bland WASPish characters that were filling comics in those days. In fact, I probably drew them better

And in the case of the White Tiger, that was Bill Mantlo who came up with the idea of doing the Puerto Rican character, totally on his own. It wasn't like I suggested it to him He suggested it first and I took it from there. I gave it the verisimilitude that was needed in order to make it look like a Puerto Rican character in an urban environment, and then I did delve into my background of growing up in the area But as far as deliberately trying to put my Puerto Rican identity on paper, that was never my own doing. Sometimes it bothered me when people would call me up saying; "We want you to talk to other Puerto Rican people here or do something more for the Puerto Rican cause, because you're a role model." That was never my intention - nor do I feel I should be a role model. They have

parents - they have themselves - to be role models. So I sometimes didn't want that extra pressure put on me because of my background. I just wanted to draw comics.

The irony of my doing the first Puerto Rican character, and it being my idea, definitely does not escape my notice. But I do want to correct people into thinking that because I'm Puerto Rican I felt *compelled* to introduce a Puerto Rican superhero. Maybe I should have in some people's minds. But I didn't. It was Bill Mantlo who started the ball rolling and I just gave it atmosphere. I think he was more Puerto Rican than I am.

Sketch: I think what I was getting at though is that your work has reflected an incredible diversity in both reflecting the world around you, having people of color and so forth, but also even if you look at just the people that you draw, there's a diversity among the types. As we talked about, all your blonde men don't look exactly the same, and so forth. But I think it's important on a cultural level that your work has reflected the diversity among the people.

Pérez: I guess it's because I've always been fascinated by people. I've been fascinated by faces. I've been fascinated by how people not only look different because of their ethnicity, but how they look different just in the slight nuances. Even noticing how big and little some people's ears are. When people comment that I draw a good African-American and point to Cyborg, Victor Stone, there are certain little elements I draw to make sure Victor isn't the standard Black man I would draw every time I need to draw an African-American For example, he has very small ears. Make that small, round *ear*, singular, because he doesn't have the other ear (laughs).

Those are the little things I do in order to make a character different because I am *fascinated* by the variety out there. And it did bother me, when I read comics as a kid that everyone looked so much alike. If it weren't for the spit curl in their hair, Bruce Wayne and Clark Kent sometimes look alike. Especially after they started the "New Look" - when Batman no longer had the jaw that could cut cheese - Bruce Wayne suddenly lost his identity a bit by no longer having the

stylized face.

When I was in high school I used to create stories. Usually they never made it much more than the plotting stages, but I always ended up casting the stories with my friends in school. So I would do little doodles - and of course with the limitations of my ability at the time - would draw the character to somewhat resemble one of my friends who I was putting into the story. I'm "casting" them into my story. So even then, I was interested in using real people in my stories.

And you start learning more and more about how to do a good - ethnically and otherwise - differentiated cast of characters. *Wonder Woman* was a greater challenge because I was convinced that I wanted Princess Diana to look like she was not an American woman. She was a Greek! And I wanted to make at least some attempt at making her look a little ethnic. And I had an island *filled* with women that I had to try to make sure did not look like I was drawing the same face over and over again.

Hey, it's like a beauty pageant. A lot of these women look alike, but you could tell they are different women. And that's what I always have to pay attention to. I took even greater liberties in the case of the *Wonder Woman* cast, creating an ethnic mix within a Greek island; figuring that some of the women they managed to recruit from other places on their raids, although I never quite said that.

Sketch: But even as a storyteller, you had an older woman, you had a younger woman, you had Wonder Woman in her - at least looks-wise - in her thirty's, so you worked with aging characters. And, you know that personally one of the things I enjoyed about your series is that you had gay and lesbian characters, including the Amazons on Themysciria.

Pérez: Well the thing is, in the case of having a gay or lesbian characters in there, that was simply logical. To me, hey, of course, that's exactly what it would be. The only reason it seemed unique was that I put it in a comic book—but I didn't exploit it. There was nothing unusual or untoward about it in my mind It was just *so* matter of fact that that's how I treated it - as matter of fact. And I think that's probably why I got away with it, because, Lord knows, if I wore that as a badge and said, "Hey, I want to do my gay story here," I would have been fighting the powers that be at that point. Although Karen would have supported me every inch of the way.

But thankfully, by treating it as, "Of course, you'd be stupid not to realize that this is going on," I think I managed to make a greater stand than I might have otherwise if I decided to come in on a white charger.

And I am fascinated by women! Not just in the obvious erotic sense but the very idea of them. Like a Martian visiting Venus, as it were. And there's so much I can work with, women of different ages, different sizes, including, as you mentioned, the older

woman, the child— we also had a woman with a *weight* problem. Yet, she was in a position of authority! Those are the things that were so great to do. And understanding that women are *not* interchangeable with men, that there are certain things and ways they will behave because they are *women*. It's part of who they are. Having a female editor, having a wife who will give me an opinion when I ask for it - and sometimes when I don't - and with a female publisher, I felt, "Ok, I'm in the perfect atmosphere. If I'm going to do Wonder Woman right, as long as I'm willing to— for the lack of anything but a horrible cliché — 'explore my feminine side', I can get this book right for the audience I intend to lure.

I know I made enemies among the fetish crowd when I made Diana no longer subject to bondage as a means of losing her powers. I got a good gay audience on *Wonder Woman* however, which I was very proud of. Because Wonder Woman has been as much a gay icon as feminine icon, and I say, " Hey, I haven't alienated them either." Good! I must be doing something right on this series—although it might explain why I had a little more trouble with the series after Karen Berger was no longer there to champion me.

Sketch: Let's switch to after Wonder Woman. You went back to Marvel, you did some work on the independents, and I know that in San Diego you talked a little bit about at least some of your independent work being a little bit more "work by rote." I know that there was a period there where it just seemed your enthusiasm in the medium was kind of at a low point.

Pérez: I think a lot of the decisions at that point were being done for the wrong reasons, by me as well, wherein comics were being done for a totally different audience, including those who just wanted to buy books as investments. And I think the love for the medium for it's own merit was being compromised. Even I made many decisions at the time based on the fact that at the "boom" I was being offered a lot of money to do new books, many of which were just formula books being done for the sake of jumping on the bandwagon.

I found that while I did good work, it wasn't heartfelt work. I look back at my work then and say, "You know, some of that artwork is very good, but the characters are strangers to me." That wasn't the reason I had gotten into comics. I was making decisions for all the wrong reasons. I was being paid a ton of money and I still wasn't happy. My wife one time had asked me if I was afraid of success.

Just like when I slowed down in order to become a better artist, sacrificing the bigger paycheck that drawing three pages a day could have garnered so that I could sit down and really think through a page. Work done strictly for the money started to depress me. This isn't what I went into the business for. And I would start slowing down even further just out of sheer - not depression - but lack of

enthusiasm. Even though I was being paid enormous amounts of money per page, considering how few pages I was producing during that down time, it didn't become all that profitable.

The sheer irony that during those early stages before the ennui set in, in what's described as my "down" period, I earned more money per page during my down period than I ever had, and probably ever will again. Because they were paying *that* well, but it wasn't being read by very many people. And of course when the bottom fell out, well, those new kids on the block were the first ones to plummet through the hole. And with so few readers having picked up those now-defunct titles, it gave the impression that I was just peripherally in the business, working in comics but not working on them.

I knew after that, that if I wanted once again to have a lasting career I had to put enthusiasm back in my work. And at the time I felt my enthusiasm would be rekindled by returning to the characters that got me into comics to begin with.

I made a concerted, deliberate attempt to rekindle my career because one of the things that that lack of enthusiasm did to me was make me lose my reputation for being able to get a book out on time. That started even before the independents. It was starting in *Wonder Woman* towards the end, particularly when I started losing Karen Berger when she had to go on maternity leave. I just started slowing down. The spark was dimming. I started making a lot of mistakes and not complete projects - projects which I had gotten paid in advance very well for - and I knew that companies were starting to not call me when it came to asking me for work, particularly not for any regular work. Because they couldn't rely on me.

However, I was being given big offers by these new companies, and I took those. Because, hey, a big paycheck - I won't have to do very much for all this money, but I realized my enthusiasm wasn't in it. So that wasn't working out and, of course, eventually those big pay rates began disappearing. There weren't companies offering those rates anymore. It was time to be hungry again. There was a whole new generation out there that probably had no idea who I was. And it was my job to show them that I could still play with the kids and make a good show of it.

Sketch: Well, before we jump onto that, and the present - although it's the perfect lead-in to Titans and Avengers - I did want to ask about, in your "ennui period" as you called it, that was when you created some of your own work like Sachs & Violens. That's when Crimson Plague started. And yet, neither of them reflected you at the top of your form.

Pérez: Well, I disagree with you totally regarding *Sachs & Violens* and *Crimson Plague*. I was enthusiastic on both of them

and I'm proud of my work. In the case of *Sachs &Violens*, the biggest problem was that, for whatever reason, I was incapable of staying on a project; my mind wandered. The first two issues, I was really excited and I enjoyed it. It was a field that I had not dealt with, a more adult fetish storyline of which I had working knowledge. I had a lot of fun. But since it was a book that had a schedule to it, I found that I was frustrated with my inability to do everything. I was penciling and inking the book. I really wanted to ink my own work; and I was not willing to accept the fact that I couldn't *do* that on a regular basis.

I think the last two issues of *Sachs & Violens* might reflect a lesser excitement because there was a lesser involvement by me. With all due respect to the inkers, it wasn't the same as when I was inking it myself, where I bled every line out. I was becoming disappointed in myself more than anything else, and when that happened I began slowing down again. That book went through scheduling hell as well at a time when it could have really benefited from coming out on time. It was one of the rare {Marvel/Epic] Heavy Hitters books that did well. It had people who wanted to see more of it. Unfortunately, I screwed that up. *Hulk: Future Imperfect* was a high point before that because I did ink myself for the whole project, and I really did like doing that. Even though the last few pages, I had to really, really rush to get finished. There's a reason why they're called *dead lines*, I guess.

In the case of *Crimson Plague*, I felt I was doing some of my best work, and was also challenged drawing real people. The biggest problem with *Crimson Plague* was the same as always; I wanted to do everything and didn't do the book with enough lead-in time so that the second issue would be at least ready to come out when it was scheduled. I hadn't even started the second issue when the first issue came out; a very bad business move on my end. And, realizing that the pressure was getting to me, I couldn't do it. And adding more negatives to that, I was no longer doing as many mainstream titles on a regular basis, not keeping my face recognized by the audience, as it were. Not to mention the fact that not doing a mainstream title meant I wasn't getting paid.

That's also when the comic business took that precipitous nosedive. *Crimson Plague* was an enormous financial loss for me, to the point that I very nearly had to declare bankruptcy. But, I was very proud of the work itself. I was very proud of the people I made happy with the work. But it was not a business move that will ever be the blueprint for any successful venture. That added yet another failure on my part. The sales on *Crimson Plague* were quite respectable, but when I first started the book we were thinking of sales figures based on the "boom", not sales figures relative to the "bust." Relative to the bust, it did well. But not enough to pay for all the start-up costs that that book garnered. I blew the opportunity for *Sachs & Violens* becoming a successful franchise by falling

behind schedule, and not finishing it with the same level of quality when I started it. *Crimson Plague's* failure just poured more salt into the wound.

That was just another example of how my career was sliding away. I don't blame the speculation market. I don't blame anyone but myself. I made bad decisions, and while I'm proud of the work, I just made all the wrong business moves when it came to dealing with them. The fact that I'm still asked about both *Sachs & Violens* and *Crimson Plague* at least makes me feel happy that I made an impact - or at least a small jolt, anyway - with those who did read it.

If I wanted to continue supporting my family though, something had to change. I just needed to get back into the limelight. I'd liked to think I was a good artist, but I was a good artist not being seen by enough people. And it was time to be seen.

Sketch: Well that led to work inking, of all things, on Dan Jurgens' Teen Titans books, and then eventually penciling Avengers again. Do you want to talk about that transition?

Pérez: I'm very grateful to both Dan Jurgens and Eddie Berganza on the *Titans* job. Since I was convinced that I wasn't going to be able to maintain a monthly title as a penciler, I thought the best way to go is to try inking on a regular basis. When Dan Jurgens called me and told me he was doing the *Titans* book, I offered my inking, which he was excited about. But as it turned out he had to fight an uphill battle with the people at DC who were already burnt quite a bit by me – with *War of the Gods*, the unfinished Titans novel, and a bunch of other things that they lost money on with me. Eddie and Dan had to champion me saying, "George said he'll stay on this book for a year. He guarantees

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he'll stay on for a year. We will not ship late on this book."

My goal was to prove it. My hope was, since it was a Titans book, that," Oh, boy! That means I can earn some royalty money, maybe I can actually afford the *Crimson Plague* project" - which I still wanted to do. I was doing *Crimson Plague* at the time, and this would help finance it, at least that was how I thought it would work out. I got on the book and inked my little ass off! Dan loved it. Eddie loved it. DC loved it, and I was nominated for a couple of awards for my inking. Unfortunately, the book *tanked*.

So I was still working on the *Crimson Plague* project and realized I had no financial infrastructure. That's another reason why *Crimson Plague* failed, because *Titans* failed. So when *Crimson Plague's* sales were merely "okay", I didn't have the extra financial cushion that I expected to have. And that's when I became more aware that, even with the *Titans*, there's no guarantee in comics. It would have been nice to earn royalties, and I can't fault Dan or anyone else for that, it's just that the book didn't sell. Who knew?

That's when Ralph Macchio started talking to me about an Avengers project, because I had been working on an Avengers graphic novel before *Heroes Reborn* made it moot. Ralph called initially to find out if I'd be interested in re-starting the graphic novel again – as the writer, initially - now that they were going to revert the title to what it was before the *Heroes Reborn* year. During our conversations, Ralph had mentioned, "If you ever want to pencil the book, it might be good for you, because it would be even better if you drew it." And I said, "It's time. Let's talk about my drawing the regular *Avengers* series instead." And, of course, while totally surprised, Ralph was totally elated; and I had thankfully developed a stronger reputation because of *Titans* that it made discussing George Pérez as a regular artist on a monthly series something that they wouldn't be laughing at.

I was quite, quite willing to work on whatever the page rate was at the time, that's fine. I wasn't looking to make big money; I was out to make my reputation again. Like I said, to be *hungry*. Thankfully, my lawyer managed to convince Marvel that if they want

all these *Heroes Return* books to make an impact, you need top-drawer talent, you have to provide certain financial incentives.

Push came to shove with the incentives, and I was being paid twice what I had agreed to work for. So I was getting paid a very, very good page rate for a book I was willing to do for half that. Unlike doing something for the money, I had taken this job because I *wanted* to do it. The money came in second, which is always a nice change of pace for me. And I was determined to be the master gunfighter again and try to show those young up-starts coming into town that to outdraw me they were going to have a fight on their hands. And I worked like crazy on *The Avengers*, putting in every little bit of storytelling, and detail, and even the subtle things in the background that I had learned in all those years. Certain retailers were skeptical on the sales of the book because *Heroes Reborn* was a financial success for them - if not for Marvel, because it was expensive. They were dubious as to how George Pérez would sell a book.

I was happy to prove that I could. And I was even happier to prove a lot of people in the industry who predicted that I would be the first artist of the *Heroes Return* team to miss an issue. I was not only the *only* one to survive the first year without missing an issue, but I lasted fifteen issues without having a fill-in, and two of those issues were double-sized. I was the only artist that actually drew the double-size issues totally on his own. Most the other artists had *other* artists helping them for the double-sized issues. I was very, very happy, and my career was salvaged. I'm experiencing what Mark Waid kindly described as a "John Travolta career arc." (laughs)

Sketch: You worked three years on Avengers and a few other jobs for Marvel. That led you to CrossGen. You find yourself again in a brand new area: fantasy comics. And it's like the situation with Malibu: it's characters that are new; the public at large doesn't know them; you can't rely on the Superman or Wonder Woman or Captain America faction of fans knowing immediately who they are. What is it about CrossGen that has appealed to you?

Pérez: One of the greatest things about CrossGen is the feeling of not only organization but also a sense of family and support from everyone. I mean, everyone wants this thing to work. When I first was offered a job at CrossGen, I *was* skeptical because of my past record of working on less-familiar characters. So I didn't make any decision on CrossGen until after I started drawing my first *CrossGen Chronicles* book. And I realized that I was really, really enjoying it.

In the case of Malibu, in the case of all those other companies, one of the things I found I didn't enjoy was that I was doing pale copies - in my mind anyway - of other characters I could be doing. With CrossGen

I was doing something totally, totally new. Something that really allowed me to stretch my artistic muscles. I found that, hey, I'm a natural at this style of working. I think it's like when John Buscema started doing Conan, they said, " Hey, he's really suited for this." And I really got excited.

When they started offering me an actual staff job my initial skepticism and my initial reluctance after over a quarter of a century of working freelance was slowly eroded by the logic and the positive aspects of the CrossGen Plan, in which we are all working together as a company to help produce, not only good books, but to benefit from one another's success.

There are no royalties in CrossGen because we are all co-owners of the company and there's a profit sharing plan. So of course we want all the books to succeed. We are paid a salary, you don't have to worry about getting vouchers in on time; I get paid every two weeks. I have a staff check. I have my taxes withheld, which is a real relief. There's a lot of respect that is paid to the creative community over at CrossGen, where we are treated as the valuable assets that we are.

We are each given books based on our strengths or what we want to do, as opposed to being considered interchangeable, wherein the characters are more important than the creators. The creators are responsible for the success of the characters. And I'm the only one - because of my medical history - who does not work in the offices five days a week because for me it's a two-and-a-half hour drive and I wasn't going to relocate. So they bend the rules for me in order to accommodate my working style.

But I'm having a grand time at CrossGen because it is unlike any other company I've worked for. While I've enjoyed good relations with the editorial staffs of Marvel and DC, they may love your work, but they don't own the company. There are other people making decisions who haven't the faintest idea who you are, and frankly, probably don't even care. And while there are definite benefits to working at Marvel and DC which I have enjoyed, there's a certain feeling about working at CrossGen that I've not felt in many a year, a sense of security a sense of *calm*. It is an organization wherein all the final decisions are made finally, by one person, Mark Alessi, whom you actually have access to. He is in charge, he will always make sure that what's done is in the best interest of the company, and thus my best interest as well.

And after doing my fourth - and for the next year my last - issue of *CrossGen Chronicles*, I'm making a decision that *this is* where I'd want to focus my career. Doing stuff outside of superheroes feels to me almost like the reverse of how it was when the industry started. Then you had artists who did so many diverse types of books, then started doing superheroes almost exclusively when the market narrowed it's focus to that. CrossGen is my reversal of that trend. I will have done super-heroes almost *thirty years*

and now be able to diversify. I think I need that.

With all the pluses and the commitment that CrossGen has to producing the best quality books - putting fans first and foremost - I think I have found a happy place to dedicate my remaining years in comics by not only producing the books, but hopefully, inspiring and training new generations of artists with the same type of enthusiasm and love for the medium that I've had for so long. And, thankfully, *still* have, even at this time of my life.

Sketch: What is your contract with them?
Pérez: My contract is a standard work contract. If I decide I want to leave, I leave. I would give them the standard two weeks notice but that's about it.

Sketch: It's not an exclusive contract?
Pérez: It's as exclusive as in any job. If you're working with or doing computer software, well then you can't make computer software for another company because you're on staff there. So it's that type of contract. If I have other commitments that I still have not finished when I joined CrossGen, they expect me to honor my past commitments. Which is why *JLA/Avengers* exists. If I chose to finish *Crimson Plague* I could, as long as it doesn't affect my work for them. They expect me to honor all pre-existing contracts. If I can't be a man of honor for another company, how can they expect me to be a man of honor for them?

Another thing that flattered me was that, even more than my artistic résumé, one of the reasons why CrossGen hired me was that they liked how I relate to the fans. They want that type of image for their company, the openness to the fans, the generosity of your time, and appreciation for their patronage. That is CrossGen's policy, first and foremost.

Sketch: This is why they've had you and the other artists sketching at conventions?
Pérez: Yeah, we sketch for free at conventions. Of course, I take my standing as a standard bearer for the company *very* seriously at these shows, where I'm sitting something like ten hours sketching without a break, and we're supposed to be doing it in two-hour intervals. But I've been doing that even before I joined CrossGen.

Now, when I go to a convention with CrossGen, I feel incredibly safe. It's nice being part of this warm family unit. Not only the artists, but also everyone who works there. They're just such loving people. We really just get wrapped up. Critics - and I'm sure this interview is not going to make them feel any different - feel like it sounds like a compound or commune and we're probably all getting "moony eyed" as it were. I've been in the business long enough to have seen many options for me and this one is definitely the one I want. My wife Carol loves it, as do I. As long as they're willing to have me, I'm there for the duration.

Sketch: One other question about your current work before we switch over to some technical questions. We've got to talk about JLA/Avengers because it's the project...
Pérez: Sure, and it's also on the cover (laughs).

Sketch: So make your grand statement about it. What do you hope for in this? What are your plans?
Pérez: Well my plan, first and foremost, is to produce the ultimate super-hero story that I can possibly do. This is a book that has had twenty years of gestation. I need to make it worth the while. It is also, for me, the greatest sense of closure. It is the one real regret I've had in my career; of not getting this one done. Out of all the projects that didn't get done, this one was not my fault. So I feel I need to get this one done. I needed to get this book done if it was possible. Thanks to CrossGen's kind of prodding Marvel and DC on to make up their minds in a timely fashion - it became a reality. I know this is the book that will be the culmination of all my superhero work. And I want to get as many members into the book as I can (laughs).

Any person who has held a JLA or Avenger membership card gets in this book. Whether it's a cameo or the lead it doesn't matter, they get in there. God forgive me, that means Vibe and Gilgamesh will also appear. Everyone will appear in this book. And since all these characters have some kind of tangential connection to other characters in other books, hey, you never know how may cameos are going to be appearing from other books. Just remember that three members of the Fantastic Four were members of the Avengers. You know that one member of the X-Men used to be an Avenger. We know that certain characters like Bloodwynd - I know he used to be the Martian Manhunter - he'll appear. Even though, frankly, I never even heard of the damn guy before this book came along (laughs).

Because it is a book that both Marvel and DC are looking forward to and are going to back with all the powers behind them, it is *not* going to be rushed. I will be inking myself, which, of course, as I mentioned before, is usually a death knell for deadlines. That's why it doesn't have one! But since I'm only taking a year off from CrossGen in order to concentrate my energy solely on it, and I want to make a living, I will, of course, not let that get in the way. I *want* this book done. They're looking towards the late 2002, early 2003. I added the "2003", they keep ignoring 2003, but that's the goal of getting the book out. They want the book to be released as four monthly titles at that point. So by the time I'm working on issue four, they'll start scheduling issue one. And I hope it kicks some major ass.

Sketch: How much are you having to do with the plot?
Pérez: The plot I have almost nothing to do with. I do some re-choreographing, like

in fight scenes. In fact Kurt Busiek had to call me up to say, "What did you do here?" because he didn't understand what I was going for.

This segues to something else I'd like impress on other aspiring artists. When you talk about the nuts and bolts of my work, I have been criticized for years, almost from day one of my career, for not putting "liner notes" on my work. I don't know why I don't do it. Maybe I'm lazy or maybe it's because the fact that it comes off like a scrawl that even I can't read. But in this case, I have to start making notes on what may be my last super hero story, 'cause I don't want Kurt to misunderstand *anything* of what I've drawn if I've changed anything. But that's one thing that all artists should make a note of, if you're doing something in a story, even if it's a subtle reaction where you want the person to actually be saying something specific put a note on the border or somewhere on the work. There've been many stories that, when I read it, I said, "God! That's not what I thought they were going to be saying." Because, hey, I'm stupid, I'm the one who didn't put a note to *tell* the writer what I wanted them to say (laughs).

Any changes I'm making during the course of this project are strictly on a choreography level. I do not change the plot. The plot already has to go through the checks and balances of Kurt writing the initial plot, going through Marvel, going through DC and Kurt going through the rewrite, going through Marvel, going through DC, *then* finally getting to me. So if they think I'm going to be involved in that kind of bureaucracy, they have another think coming. The reason I wanted Kurt Busiek on this book is that I know he's going to do a damn good job. And he'll be able, because of his experience

as a writer, to deal with the politics and sometimes the petty decisions made editorially, and I'll just get to draw the book and everyone will say, "Oh, Wow! What great stuff," and be very content with that.

Sketch: And then after that you intend to return to CrossGen ?

Pérez: Yes, and CrossGen is my home for as long as they'll have me.

Sketch: Okay. So let's switch over to the specifics of how you work. Maybe people can pick up some hints from this or...

Pérez: Or know what to avoid (laughs).

Sketch: You work in an office, in your home. Do you still draw on your back?

Pérez: I used to draw on my back until I started using more references.

Sketch: Now, I should say that that doesn't mean that you literally draw the pages on your back (laughs).

Pérez: Oh yeah, I'm not that much of a contortionist. But I used to lie on a couch and just sit with a lapboard and prop it up and draw. I mean I still do, sometimes, sketches that way. Drawing is very portable. You can draw anywhere. One time Bill Sienkiewicz and his wife and I were in a hotel room and I went into the bathroom and worked (laughs).

Sketch: The only place you can't draw is the beach.

Pérez: The beach, yeah, because your board acts like a reflector right in front of you, so you're being blinded by your own paper. So that's the only place I cannot draw. But now, because of the amount of reference, I use an adult, standing drawing board. I had to be an adult and actually get myself a *real* drawing board years and years ago, and now I use that exclusively. The only time I draw away from the drawing board I will be sitting in a lounger. That's as opposed to lying on my back with a lapboard.

Another reason I don't lie down to draw anymore is that I wear bifocals now, and with the lower part of the bifocal, I cannot see a television set clearly. I have to look over the upper part. And I can't do that lying down. So, sitting at a drawing board positions me in

the correct way, so I can use my glasses to be able to watch television while I'm working.

Sketch: You actually watch TV while you're drawing?

Pérez: Yes. Mostly stuff with a lot of talk in it. I am a sucker for courtroom shows. I'm talking about – yes - *Judge Judy* and *Divorce Court* and *People's Court* and all those. I've watched those religiously because you can just listen. Sometimes the whole case goes by and I realize I didn't even see what those guys looked like. It gives me some controlled noise. Sometimes I will play stereo or my CD's while I'm working. It depends on my mood

But sometimes I just need that to relax the eyes, to focus on something else for a few seconds, and then get back to drawing. I try not to, and sometimes can't, draw while watching something of intense visual quality. Obviously, a silent movie I couldn't watch while I was working. Or something that has a lot of silent pauses, or is heavy into action; in order to do that I would basically put my board down and sit down and watch television. And Lord knows I could never watch anything with subtitles (laughs).

That's the way I like to work. In the late hours, if I'm working a late night - into the morning - I will not turn anything on for fear that if anything suddenly makes a loud noise it might wake up my wife. So I have worked in total silence before and I can do that, but after a while you just need the world to come alive around you.

Sketch: You've talked a lot about using reference in your work. Do you reference everything these days? I mean like P. Craig Russell; many of his panels are photo referenced, he has models come in and so forth.

Pérez: I don't use models for figure work because I worry that the characters will look a little stiff and posed if you rely on that too much. For me, if I want a character to be jumping, well, there's no way a model is going to be able to do that, and for me be able to catch them in mid-flight or basically have them suspended in the air. So I tend to use photos in order to get basic musculature and sometimes shadows and clothes. I would get magazines, like wrestling magazines, because then you have muscular people moving in different ways other that posing, which sometimes helps for action shots of certain arm and leg movements.

That, plus dance magazines and photos of dancers, just to get movement. Especially if I'm stuck on how an armpit would look if the arm were in a certain position, that type of thing. I use that when I get "blocks" when handling the figure work. Most of the time I will draw the figure work totally from memory, because I've been doing it for a lot of years. And the references are saved for the less usual movements.

If I need to draw a car, I have a couple of standard cars I've drawn from my head. But

sometimes I would want to draw different hubcaps or check out what the undercarriage looks like. So I get the photo references for that. One of the scenes in *JLA/Avengers* takes place outside a shopping mall. So in the parking lot you have all these cars. I hate drawing cars! But if I'm going to draw them, I get the references for them in order so that the cars look different from one another. I went to my own shopping mall and photographed it so I could see how cars looked like lined up against each other. So you get the references any way you can.

Also, the thing about referencing material; if you're referencing a city, for example, you really have to update your references, because cities do change. I've had references on New York that, unfortunately, are over a decade old, and certain areas of Times Square don't look like the photos any more. So you have to keep aware of your references. *(Of course the events of September 11th, two weeks after this interview was conducted, lends a sense of unfortunate irony to this statement)*

A horse will always look like a horse. But for it's something that's technological or constructed, you have to keep your reference files updated.

Sketch: I had thought that in more recent years you had done some figure drawing classes, but I guess not...

Pérez: No. I've had models who've posed for me. But usually, I would use their faces and some of their gestures, and Lord knows many of them are grateful when I do a little "touch-up" on their bodies (laughs). If I'm drawing them on a canvas of exaggerated comic book art, to draw them a little too realistically you may get a person who's perfectly fine in normal human proportions but who looks a little dumpy, looks a little frail, or doesn't look heroic enough. So you have to play up with that.

I mean, Boris Vallejo is a body builder. Of course he can use himself as a model, and in his case he's also doing paintings. I mean the characters can look posed, if it's only that one static image. When I'm doing comic characters, I like to keep the electricity about them. I'd spoken to Neil Gaiman years ago when I first was doing *Crimson Plague*, and when I told him I was using real models his concern was, "Aren't they going to start looking a little static?" And I never even consciously thought about that. But since I wasn't doing what he thought I was doing; using the poses as well as the faces, I'd managed to control having the characters look as if they're just posing for a photograph. And make the characters move, because all I did was enhance the life of the characters by giving them real features, and learning how to draw a greater variety of faces in the long run. But all those years that I learned how to twist and turn human anatomy to suit the needs of the medium is something that I would not sacrifice just to make it look more photographically real

Pérez: When I get a plot, I read it through. Sometimes I skim it through, which is a big mistake; you should actually *read* the darn thing. If you miss a little detail, you'll regret it later. And I'm blessed with the ability to read something and automatically start visualizing.

There are artists who thumbnail a page, meaning that they draw the page on a smaller 8.5" x 11" sheet, doing all the erasing and all the positioning and construction and composition, and then lightbox that and do the finished drawing on the actual art board. I draw directly onto the art board. I use a blue pencil in order to do a lot of the design work, a lot of the construction and composition. Since blue will not reproduce, I don't have to worry about erasing all of that as I put the graphite on the areas I actually want to draw. I found that when I used a regular pencil for designing, I couldn't keep erasing every construction line and it would make it harder for the inker to understand which line is supposed to be inked, and which line is supposed ignored. Blue pencil solved that for me.

I try to, in my mind, think of it as a silent movie, and figure where my impact panel is going to be. What scene is where I want to build up to, and then taper off from? What gets the spotlight? And I work from there.

In my case, one of the things I've done throughout my career, and most people who look at my work will notice it, is that I seldom - unless it's a deliberate design element - repeat the layout on one page after another. If I use a certain grid design on one page, you can be sure it's not going to be on the next page; two consecutive pages will not have the same grid design. It's just my way of taking advantage of this larger canvas, as opposed to drawing, what in essence could be comics strips stacked on top of each other. I have this 10" by 15" area space, give or take, that I can play with. That means I can draw long vertical, long horizontal panels. I can have a mixture. I can have circular panels. I can do a lot of things on that page because I have this large image area that's supposed to be segmented into a design.

Once I go through the plot - even before I go into any of my references I consider where I want to position everything as far as the story-telling elements are concerned. Before, then I would go back and say, "Okay, a car's going to appear here, now let me get the car reference." I know where I want to put the car. I know what angle I'm thinking of for the car. Now let me find a photograph that will match, or that I can adapt, to work on that page.

I use a .03 Pentel mechanical pencil, which is thinner than the average .05. I like to be able to get all the detail in on the pencil, and hopefully, if the paper's good, I won't end up engraving the damn thing into the paper. Then I start building the page out. I usually

start with the character and, unlike a lot of artists, I don't always start with the head. I sometimes start with the hand or something else that strikes my fancy. It may be because it's in the foreground; so the hand comes first. Or it's just the fact that I want everything to be in relation to this part of the body. Or I will start drawing the legs first, so I know for sure the character will fit with his legs clear on the page.

Even as I'm going along, I may change the angle. I may draw a panel, and then realize that as I'm drawing the character, "Hmm, I'm not leaving enough room for dialogue." So I'll have the panel's original border disappear and overlap slightly against the other panel just so it has that extra eighth of an inch of space that can be used for a line of dialogue. Even after I've designed a page fully it's all subject to change.

When I do covers, one of the things that has always been unique for me is that I *hate* to design covers. I create my covers pretty much head-on. I don't like doing thumbnail versions and have them approved. I've had maybe a handful of covers that I've done that way. And almost without fail, by the time the cover was finished, it looked very little like the original design. Which is why I don't like doing thumbnails.

Drawing for me is very organic; I keep changing my mind as I go along. Things that I've placed emphasis on, *that* usually won't change. It's those little details - sometimes backgrounds that I wanted to put in - that will disappear. And backgrounds that weren't going to be in one panel suddenly will appear. The balance of white and black may alter from my original idea.

But one of the things that has amazed several younger artists is the fact that I pretty much do see the page in my mind. With the exception of the tweaking and the nuances, I've designed the page the second I've read the plot. And I have an idea of where to go from there. I guess twenty-seven-and-a-half years experience has helped me hone that. And it's a natural gift, which is why I'm working in comics and not in advertising, I guess.

Sketch: You talked about the pencils you use. What are some of the other tools that you use in penciling and inking and so forth? Erasers?

Pérez: I use a kneaded rubber eraser most of the time. Sometimes I will use a vinyl type of eraser. Depending on the paper, sometimes kneaded rubber isn't abrasive enough to get all the pencil lines off, so I would use another one. The vinyl one is a little smoother than the standard pink rubber eraser, which can be very, very rough and sometimes can take some of the tooth of the paper with it.

I ink with a Hunt 102 now. I used to use a Hunt 100, which is more flexible, but I find that the paper that some of the companies are using now has slightly heavier "clay quality" which makes the pencils dig in a little deeper,

and it makes the pens drag a little more. So I can't use a flexible point because I can't control it, so now I use a very hard nib, fine, fine pen, the 101 and the 102, I believe. The 102 is the one I'm using now. It's a good solid quill.

And I use the same ink I use in my rapidograph; Koh-I-Noor's UltraDraw is the ink I use. I used to use other inks, but this shows you how anal I can be. I used to use an ink called Black Magic, which was a wonderful, dense, dense black; it almost has a patent black sheen to the page. But that's not the ink I could use in the rapidograph. So, even though it will print exactly the same, I could see the two varying shades of black on the page from the stuff that I use with a technical pen and the stuff I use with a quill and the brush. It just bothered me. So I use the same Rapidograph ink for brush and quill as well because then it's the same uniform blackness throughout the book, even though it makes absolutely no difference in the reproduction. Which shows, again, how anal I can be about this.

And, getting back about using a brush, the reason I don't use a brush is not out of preference; it's out of physical limitation. I am so double-jointed in my fingers that my fingers bend backwards when I hold a drawing implement. So when I draw with pencil, and when I draw in pen, I rely on the resistance of the paper for control. That provides just the right amount of counter pressure against my hand. I can't use that kind of pressure with a brush 'cause I'll be bending the point of the brush every time. And it'll just "sploosh", and I'd loose all control. So, that's the reason I've been working with a pen exclusively my entire career. And every attempt I've ever made to use a brush, usually made the work go *incredibly* slow. The amount of extra control needed was a lot harder on me. Not to men-

PLATE THREE
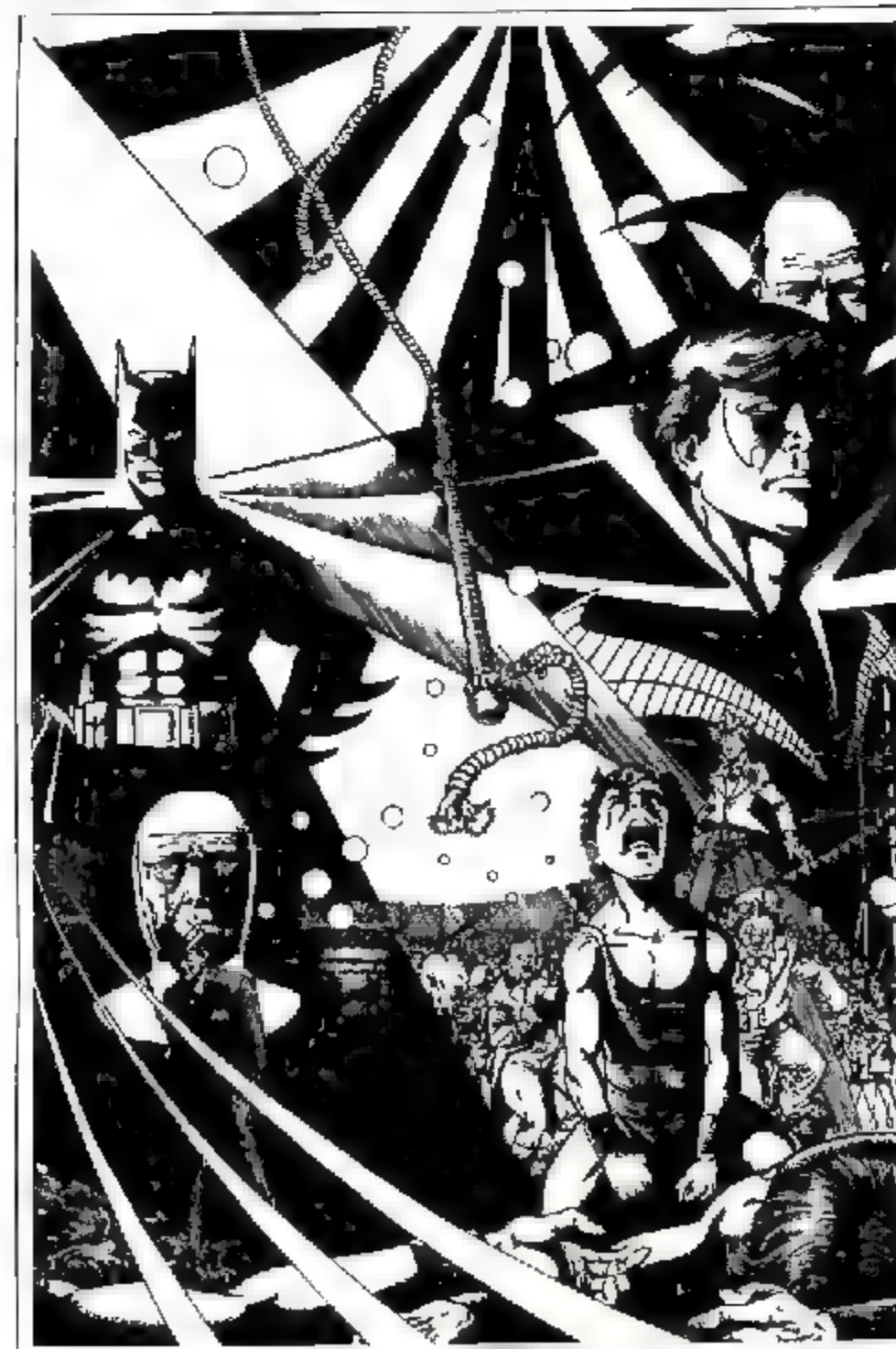
tion the cramp in my fingers. But it was also not as fine-tuned a line.

I envy people like Brian Bolland who would be able to get that kind of delicacy with a brush. I could not do it. So my job, when I started working exclusively with pen, is to develop a fluidity of line that looks like a brushwork, particularly in things like hair or things that are very flowing. And I worked very hard on developing my ability to do that despite a physical limitation.

Sketch: Do you use markers at all?

Pérez: I stopped using markers for drawing because - strangely enough, you get fans who complain about it if they've ever bought any original art: "It's fading into red!" Plus, markers, if you need to correct, will not accept whiteout well. It'll start bleeding the colors; the colors will start mixing. While markers can serve a purpose in the short run, there are too many limitations compared to what India ink can do and the mediums with which India ink can mix. There are inkers, however, who do use markers, and it really suits them. As I said, I used to, but then I enjoy the real fineness of the quill that I use.

There's not a marker around, at least that I thought, that can equal the fine point of my quill. But then I found Mike Perkins - who inks me on *CrossGen Chronicles* - and he inks with what looked like very thin markers or Micron pens. And I said, "He's inking all this fine detail with a pen, a regular pen, with a cap and everything!" I couldn't believe it! And he does such great job at it. My whole feeling is that maybe I'll change, but now I'm kinda used to using a quill. I think I'll stick to it for a while. And since I don't intend to be at CrossGen as an inker, I say, "Nyahh, it don't matter to me."

I attended an inking seminar a few years ago, and was very educated on how many different ways there are to ink and how many different tools you can use outside of the conventional. People who use the end of a pencil eraser, a small eraser to do those little black dots of energy that Jack Kirby made famous, by just dipping the eraser into ink and then dotting the artwork.

There's the more splatter method of using toothbrushes with white paint or white ink in order to get star effects to make it look like a star cluster - a more random one, as opposed to dotting them by hand one at a time. It's just an amazing number of things that can be used. Mine is pretty much the quill, the rapidograph and the brush for the really big black areas. Even most of the time I would use a number three or number four rapidograph to fill in black areas. The brush gets very little use from me.

Sketch: Have you experimented at all using computers?

Pérez: Not as an artist. I've only used computers if I've scanned my pictures, as I'm doing with *JLA/Avengers*, and making corrections and erasures. If a line scanned in with smudges I would clean it up. If a stray pencil line that I didn't manage to erase all the way reproduced, I will take care of that. If I need a special effect - and this again only applies to an inked page - where I want something to repeat, well then I can do cut-and-paste, because that's an effect that can only be done through something, either a copy machine or a computer that I could never copy myself line for line. I seldom do that, but there have been occasions where I want a sign in the background to be in another scene. Well the sign doesn't change, so I can actually cut-and-paste. But for the most part I leave the computer to the color artist and the letterers. When it comes to basic drawing, I could never surrender the feeling and sensuality of putting a pen to paper. I don't think I could ever replace that joy with a computer.

Sketch: What paper do you use?

Pérez: They use really, really thick paper here at CrossGen. I think they have the paper specially made, and they have some of the best paper in the industry. I mean, I've been using a four-ply paper for *CrossGen Chronicles*. I can serve dinner on these boards. This is really heavy-duty board.

Sketch: Do the inkers ink your work on the board or do they work on velum?

Pérez: Inking is done strictly on the boards.

Sketch: Your work is known for having an incredible amount of detail in it. What are the secrets to putting in a lot of detail without it cluttering up the art?

Pérez: A lot of that is based on experience, especially when you start seeing your work printed. Which is why, if you do artwork where you can get a job with a small press or somehow print the work yourself reduced to the size that would be printed, it's good to learn how much closing up some line elements might have. Two lines that are close together can become a black bar when they're reproduced at a smaller size.

Reproduction is a lot better now than it was when I started. The paper quality, for one thing, accepts thinner lines now than would ever have been possible when I started. And you should always be aware how your line will look if there's going to be color on the page. You don't want color to be something

that's just going to make things look muddy because you have too many lines.

Usually, people, when they put in extra lines, are putting in lines to cover-up. I'm talking about starting artists, not professionals. To cover up the weaknesses of either a character or a background they'll put extraneous lines in to divert attention from the flaws. When you do a lot of lines on clothing and you go against the flow of the clothing, or, as we were saying in sewing terms, "against the grain"; then it just looks like sloppy inking. You have to understand how things move.

The direction that an item is pointing or how it's curved will help determine how many lines you can put in there, and in which direction the line goes. But the amount of detail is a hit and miss proposition. I was aware, when I started, that when I put in more detail and we had these horrible plastic plates on pulp paper, how much my lines were breaking up, how much I was losing. In those days, what I used to think is that, "Well, if I put a hundred lines on this page, and fifty come out in print, at least I'll have fifty lines. If I put fifty lines, in this page, only twenty-five come out, I will have even less work." So I put in even more lines on the page, hoping that at least some of them make it through alive.

Now I've learned how to do the tiny, tiny detail, and amazingly, I don't need glasses to do my work -I just need glasses to look at television. But the amount of detail I put in is my way of feeling like I've earned my money. I'm grateful to be working in comics, so I just put in the extra stuff because those are the people who inspired me the most.

When Barry Smith was doing his stuff on Conan I was mesmerized by the amount of work there. And I've just been influenced by so many people who put in the extra bit of work, and now I look at my work and there's a lot of detail. I can tell that it's not quite as dense as it used to be. I put more elements in than there used to be, but I don't put quite as many extra noodles on those elements as I used to. Because that does become cluttered. Like, while I may draw a hundred people in the background, I draw all their faces individually. But if they're all wearing caps, that doesn't necessarily mean that I'm now going to make all those caps plaid. That's something that can be done by a colorist, if they so chose.

It is an unnecessary extra bit of noodling to try to put teeth where you can't draw teeth that small, or else you have to draw them so large that they will only be able to fit five teeth in their head. So you start learning, and most people, when they see detail, and that's all they see and that's all they copy; then they're ignoring construction and the basic drawing.

One time, I think it was Dick Giordano who said to me that more stylistically representative of my work is not just my detail, but my storytelling. One time he hired me strictly to do storytelling layouts for another artist because he said that's one of my

strongest suits. It's kind of nice to have a few different strong suits.

And when you mention detail, I have one of my proudest moments recently when, I think it was Wizard Magazine, that actually had "Pérez-like detail" as a description of another person's work. And I said, "I've become an adjective. I am now part of artistic lexicon. I love this!" (laughs)

Sketch: You talked about color. How do you work with, and how do you suggest people work with, understanding how to deal with artwork that's going to be colored?

Pérez: Well in dealing with color, since I'm not a colorist myself, I only deal in the basic values, where the light source is, where the shadow is. And I trust the colorist to work from there. The only thing which is the same with penciling and inking is that a colorist has to know that the coloring is there to help tell the story. You don't put garish colors on a night scene. You don't put deep colors of the same hues if you want to keep things clear, unless you really, really know what you're doing if you're going for mood. But that's something that I'm not as qualified to speak about, because I really just deal in black and white.

Most of the times, if I'm thinking of color, I am thinking of a mood. So in the case of *Crimson Plague*, where there were scenes that went deep into red because I wanted to be able to show a grisly scene; evoke the bloodiness of it without then making it too gory because since every thing is red, it minimized the effect of the red blood itself. But those are few and far between. Most of the time I leave it to the colorists to determine how to do it. While I can't articulate how I think coloring should be done, I'm well aware when it's done wrong. Then I will say, "That's not the color I had in mind." And sometimes I can say what I want and sometimes I hope that they'll get it right the second time.

Sketch: Let's talk about things that you've learned over the years that are some of the tricks to working fast? What are some of the short-cuts that you've learned that you can say, "Okay, you don't have to draw it that way, you can draw it this way."

Pérez: Well, I'm probably the wrong person to ask about taking short-cuts. Lord knows, if I'd taken more short-cuts I'd probably be producing a lot more work. The only short-cut I've ever found valuable to me is the close-up. If you want to save time, close in on a person's face. That's one element, and it does not take - if you're good at it - the amount of time that drawing the entire figure would have taken you. And know when to emphasize that.

There are going to be times when a shadow would work very, very well. We toss a character into shadow for effect; well, not only is it a nice rest for the eyes, it has impact, but it's easier. Cause you're just drawing a big blackened area. And those are pretty much the only short-cuts I've really taken. I

don't like using xeroxed backgrounds. I don't like to use the standard face. I don't have as many short-cuts, per se, but then again, if I do need one, and it works for the story, a good close-up or one gigantic element or silhouette will do the trick. It's just that if you did a whole page full of silhouettes you'd better have a good reason for it.

Sketch: (laughter) They're standing in front of the sun.

Pérez: If you're having a fight scene, in which they're fighting in front of the sun, yes, that could have an effect too. But doing an entire story that way, you're not getting any real felling of what the characters are looking like now

Sketch: Who are some of the people who you're currently learning from in the comic industry?

Pérez: Actually, most of the people I'm learning from, I don't even know their names. Since I don't read comics all that much, I'm just struck by the visual. I was just looking at a Tim Bradstreet cover, I just said, "Wow! Look at the way he drew the folds in the shoulder of that coat." Those are the little bits and pieces that I just pick up, as opposed to studying anyone religiously or even having the time to read a comic and study their storytelling Now it's gotten past the point of studying people for their storytelling styles; by not reading comics I don't get a chance to do that I'm content now to pick out that little extra stylistic flourish or technique from someone that might just be something I can add to my arsenal of artistic tricks. Noticing how this person has done hair or noting an interesting way someone shades a nose. Or, what a great belly button that girl's got. It's all those little things that I pick up now since I don't have time to read many comics anymore, Sometimes I will draw something and "Oh my God, that's a wrinkle the way Tim Bradstreet would have drawn it, That's a Gil Kane nose! Oh, there's a shadow the way Jerry would have done it " Lord knows, Jerry might have gotten that shadow technique from someone else himself. It's always a great learning experience, and sometimes it just comes at you with no rhyme or reason or warning.

Sketch: Now, if you don't read comics much anymore, how do you do your research?

Pérez: Well, research is sent to me. Kurt Busiek, in the case of JLA/Avengers, has every character name in the plot capitalized. So anything that's all capitalized, I call up saying I need reference for and they send it to me The only drawback in that is they usually send me photocopies; and unfortunately, the color red photocopies as black So sometimes that doesn't help me, and I would have to go to the comics shop and pick up a copy so I can see it in color. That's the one drawback of not reading comics regularly anymore.

Sketch: I can't believe companies have cut you off of their comp lists.

Pérez: Oh, it doesn't bother me. I was being buried under those damn things. I appreciated when they sent me the comps, but after a while, it was just way, way too much.

Sketch: What kind of advice do you have for people who are looking at self-publishing?

Pérez: The first and most important thing that I really, really did learn. have a good financial infrastructure. Plan for failure; because if you don't sell well and don't lose your shirt, at least you can come out of it with a chance to produce a second book and hope that will do better. You must always be prepared to fail. If you succeed, then you've got even more to build on. But if you don't have a good financial structure, a good plan, *and* a reasonable and doable schedule for yourself wherein you know you'll get that book out on time every time according to the schedule that you yourself have set; if you can't do any of that, don't produce the book.

You have to be aware that the market is limited out there and you've got to be smart. If you're going to produce the book, find way to cut corners as far as your costs are concerned. While black and white is not a monumental seller, Lord knows, it may be the only way you're going to get your book out there and not lose your shirt – because color is expensive.

Understand the business dealings of producing a book If you're going to be dealing with Diamond Distributors, know how much of the cover price goes to Diamond. How much money is this book going to cost? What kind of cover price do

Page from the unfinished Teen Titan Graphic Novel

you have to put on the book in order for you to realistically sell it, and realistically, make a profit from it - if there is a profit to be had?

All these things are the nuts and bolts in the business aspect. As far as producing the book, beyond producing the book in a timely fashion is to understanding the type of audience you're going for. If you want to do an independent book, then you know you're going to have a limited audience. If you're going to do a superhero book, be prepared that people are seeing those everywhere. You may just be trying to add to an oversaturated market.

While this may sound a bit downbeat and sometimes even pessimistic, there are success stories. And they come out of nowhere. *Bone* succeeded out of nowhere. It started in black and white, and it catered to an audience that was not being fully served.

But for the most part, self-publishing it is something that you don't do if you're depending on a livelihood coming out of the gate. You have to be prepared for it not to make money so that you don't starve, go into debt, or file bankruptcy if it doesn't succeed. If you can do a book, and afford to do a book - that might mean finding other people to work with you and co-finance or whatever - then you have a better chance of succeeding. Even if self-publishing is done strictly to get your work out there, to get the artistic fulfillment…artistic fulfillment is great, but it can have a slightly bittersweet taste if you end up having to put a second mortgage on your home for it

Sketch: Speaking of fulfillment, you've worked in the industry now for almost thirty years. You've won awards after awards after awards and yet I still know you as the guy who is self-deprecating about your work. You still have doubts of sometimes whether your work is popular. With some people it might seem like false modesty. I know you well enough that I know it's not – it's actual real modesty. How do you deal with being a fan favorite, with falling from grace, getting back into grace? All the ups and downs – you're still here twenty-seven years later or so.

Pérez: I think, first and foremost, I love drawing comics. It's what I will do to my dying day. My goal is to have an unfinished page in my drawing board when I die. My next goal is to have that page be a long time off. Maybe I should draw a half-finished page now, so that at least I know that twenty years down the line, it will be there when I die. I generally am enthused about the medium as a way of telling stories, about a way of doing these grandiose epics, a nice short escape from reality. Or sometimes a commentary on reality. But I just love to draw. It's what I was born to do.

I am eternally, eternally grateful to the fans for their support, and I

understand that this is a medium where tastes can change in a heartbeat. Where a new style may hot one day and be considered passé the next. So for me to have a twenty-seven year successful career is awe-inspiring, but it also makes me understand that I've had to grow, and continue growing, that I can't be complacent.

Some people might consider that self-deprecating or insecurity; it's just my desire not to be, not necessarily ignored, but considered passé because I am no longer putting effort into my work. If tastes change, and my stuff does not sell, I can accept that; that has happened. If my stuff ceases to sell because of a perception that I am no longer putting my best work in, or no longer have my heart in my work, that is something I cannot tolerate in myself.

I genuinely have that feeling of wanting to please. It is a respect I try to give to the fans. I try to respect them when they come at conventions. Treat them with a friendly smile and a handshake in order to have them feel comfortable. And I think my work has to be an extension of that, wherein I have to be respectful and friendly to my fans in my work. And that means putting my best work out there, putting my best effort, my sheer enjoyment and love for what I do, and share it with them. Because if I don't, if I become arrogant enough to accept that my name is all I'll ever need to put on a page, and I don't have to put that love in... if I can't dedicate myself to producing the work, I can never expect a fan to dedicate his time to enjoying the work.

So I will always have that "worry" feeling about not pleasing somebody. That's the only way I will ever feel I'm forced to get better, and I'm forced to pay attention to the details.

Sketch: I don't think anybody can say you don't pay attention to the details. George, thank you very much for your time...

Pérez: Thank you Andy, and thank your transcriber, who definitely has his or her work cut out for them (laughs).

Andy Mangels has been working in the comic industry for the past sixteen years, his career periodically linked with that of George Perez throughout that time. Mangels' first published writing was in the Fantagraphics book Focus on George Perez in 1985, and Andy interviewed George for many issues of Amazing Heroes, Comics Interview, and other magazines in the years following.

Mangels has maintained a mammoth archive of Perez's work for over twenty years. At the fall 2001 San Diego Comic Con, Mangels released The Perez Archives. The self-published book contained a complete listing of Perez's published work, along with lots of unpublished and rarely seen artwork. Sales of the Archives benefitted the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund and - to date - have raised over $8,000 for the CBLDF. A new version of the Archives is planned for summer 2002.

As a comic book scribe, Mangels has written comics for DC, Marvel, Wildstorm, Image, WaRP, Topps, Acclaim, Innovation, Eclipse, Tundra, Rip Off Press, and other companies. He edited the award-winning Gay Comics anthology for eight years (one of which had a cover inked by George Perez), and his Boba Fett: Twin Engines of Destruction book for Dark Horse was voted by fans as the best single Star Wars comic ever published!

Mangels also has written numerous books. His latest is Star Trek: The Next Generation "Section 31: Rogue" (co-written with Michael A. Martin), now in its second printing, with two more Star Trek novels contracted for at present. Mangels' best-selling book Star Wars: The Essential Guide To Characters is in its tenth printing, and he has also written Beyond Mulder & Scully: The Mysterious Characters of The X Files and From Scream To Dawson's Creek: The Phenomenal Career of Kevin Williamson

In addition to writing comics and books, Mangels does a wide variety of journalism and licensing writing. He has written for The Hollywood Reporter, The Advocate, Cinescape, Gauntlet, SFX, Dreamscape, Sci-Fi Universe, Starlog, Outweek, Frontiers, Farscape Magazine, Wizard, Hero Illustrated, Overstreet's FAN, Marvel Age, Comics Scene, Comics Interview, Fantazia (UK), Star Trek Monthly (UK), Star Wars Monthly (UK), Edizione Star (Italy), and scores of other entertainment and lifestyle magazines. Mangels has also written licensed material for Lucasfilm, Paramount, New Line Cinema, Universal Studios, Warner Bros., Microsoft, Abrams-Gentile, Kenner Toys, Applause, Hamilton Plates, Don Post Studios, and Platinum Studios. Recently, he has been writing DVD liner notes and supplemental materials for Anchor Bay Entertainment.

In his spare time (what spare time?) Mangels tries to actually read some comics, when not pursuing more work or updating his Perez archives Visit his webpage at www.andymangels.com

Page from the unfinished Teen Titan GraphicNovel

By Beau Smith

From The Ranch
Size DOES Matter

Right about now you're thinking that the title of this article has some sort of lurid porno-like meaning.

Good. That means you're human and haven't fallen under the iron thumb of political correctness yet.

What I mean by the title is that no matter what size your company or you are.... it's an advantage. Use it like one.

I've mentioned before that some of the best marketing ideas and tricks I learned were from my days at Eclipse Comics. We were the number three publisher then, but number three was a lot farther behind one and two than you can ever imagine. Back then Marvel Comics was 60% of the business, DC Comics was 35%, and the rest of us fought for the scraps.

Being hungry is good. Makes you aggressive and keeps you alert for opportunities. A lion always hunts better with an empty stomach.

Be the lion.

If you're small, say a small publisher or a creator with a small print run book, make that work for you.

• Call the retailers up across the country and talk to them on a one-to-one basis. Get personal. Let them know the person behind the company or the comic book. Ask them for five minutes of their time. Find out the trends in their shops. What's working for them and what's not. You don't have to really push your company or book that much. That's done in follow up.

• Follow Up. After you talk to them and have added their info to your rolodex of power, send them a copy of your comic book or samples of the work your company does. In your letter tell them you appreciate their time and help. Ask them to look over your samples or comic book, and to please consider it when they make their orders or reorders.

• Follow Up II. Every month after that call or drop that retailer a letter and check in with them. If you have a comic or comics list that retailer in your letters page and mention them. Send them a copy of the comic and point that out. Now they "owe" you.

Being small you're able to do things that a larger company or person doesn't have time for, has too large an overhead for, or has just forgot what it's like to be small . to be hungry.

• Never present yourself as being too needy. Always give the feeling that you are busy, but never too busy to talk with the person you're dealing with. Make them feel a part of your inner circle.

• Do your homework on the people you're dealing with. Doesn't matter if they are a distributor, magazine, retailer...whatever...know about them. If you know their patterns then it's easier to hunt them.

• Do a favor for them. Even if you don't make money right off the bat or get something in return. You're looking at the big picture. The long haul. Further down the line you will need a favor from them. They will always feel "in debt" to you. They will come to you and return that favor a hundred times over if you let it linger. Make sure that favor is a good one that will make an impression. If you can't make it a big one then make it a series of small ones that will add up. This gives the effect that they are behind on taking care of you and will really go overboard with a payback. Always deny that they "owe" you anything when they bring it up.

• With the internet you will be able to find more opportunities than ever before. You will be able to hunt down those trends quickly and act on them even quicker. Be the guy that knows what's going on. Take the info and thoughts on message boards and be able to sift through what is useful and what isn't. Nine times out of ten there is just a handful of the same people post-ing on message boards Don't always believe the hype of a web site telling you that they get millions of hits. Look more to how many millions they are making off their site or their company. Web site hits can be molded into anything you want. When someone starts telling me about all the hits their site gets I suggest they stop all the crying and show me the baby.

• Having a web site is important, don't get me wrong. Use it the right way Use it as a steering wheel to your product. Steer them to buy your product. Use that site to sell your product or a side item of it. Have that site pay for itself and your product. Too many get caught up in using their site as an ego stroke to remind themselves how good they are...or think they are. A web site is a mirror. To be used as a device to reflect sales, not your ego.

Even after you become big always think of yourself as small. True...with size comes power, but there is also the chance of becoming overweight and slow. If you think and act like a small quick animal you will always be a step ahead and three thoughts ahead of the game.

Little things mean a lot and add up quickly Use everything you have to get the most from your work A degree in marketing and business is great, but I've found that common sense is always the most important degree to have.

Use it

From the Ranch,

Beau Smith

Blue Line Pro

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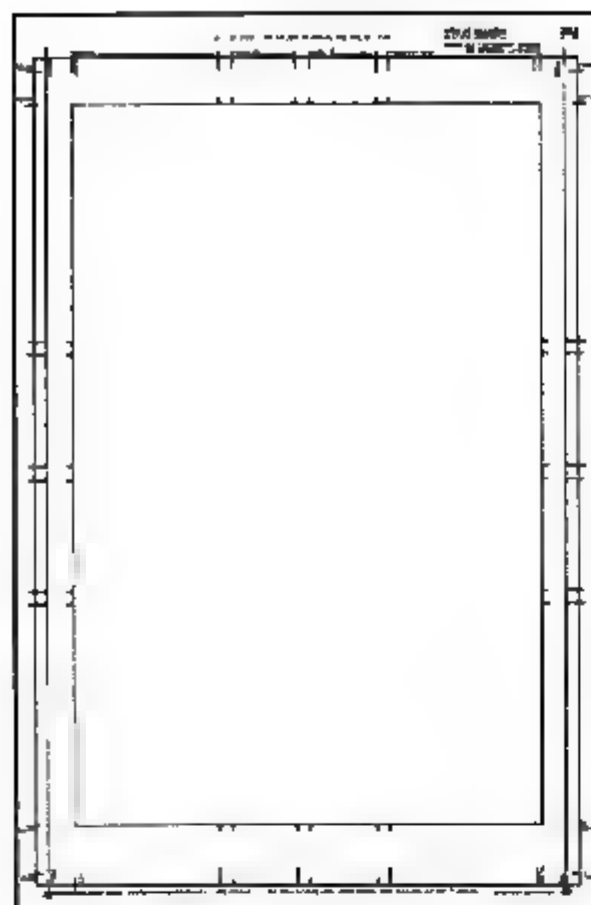
Full Trim Format Art Boards

PLY:
Ply is the thickness of the paper. A 2 ply paper has two pieces of paper pressed together and a 3 ply has 3 pieces of paper pressed together which is thicker than 2 ply.
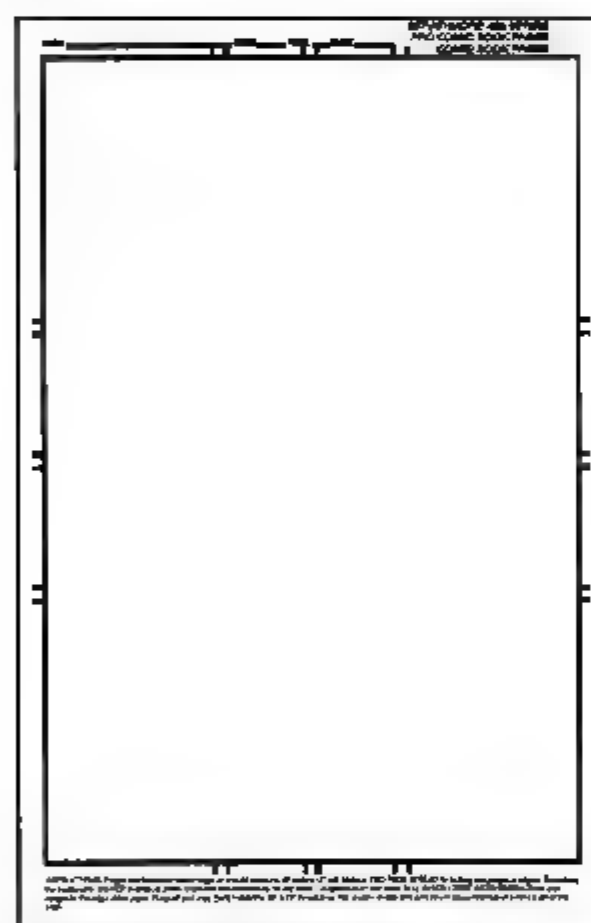
Traditional Format Art Boards
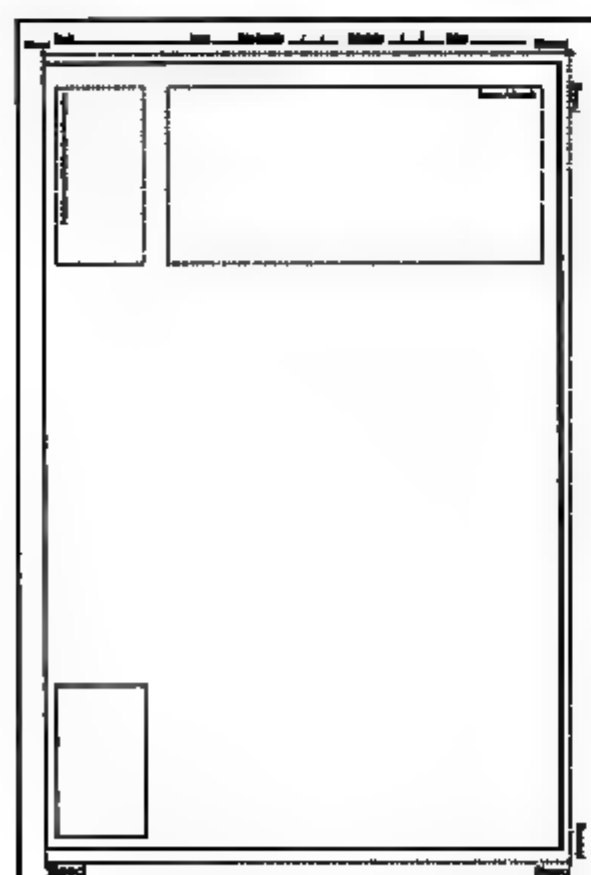
Cover Sheets

Blue Line now offers comic artist an full trim comic book board to draw your comics. Just recently comic book publishers have been using full trim comic book boards to draw their comics. Blue Line has designed a full trim page that fits most requirements for full bleed comics but can also be used to draw traditional comic book page formats. Special dotted borders helps the artist to keep the important illustrations within an area to be sure it's not lost to trimming.

PREMIERE300(STRATHMORE)

300 Series Full Trim Format

PRO 300 Series Comic Book Boards is an economical heavyweight paper. Like the rest of the Blue Line products the Pro 300 Series is pre-printed with a non-photo blue border that allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals do.

• **PRO 300 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100lb. 100% acid free board. This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
- **ITEM#** BL1041 *SRP $17.00*
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

• **PRO 300 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100lb. 100% acid free board. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, charcoal and watercolor.
- **ITEM#** BL1042 *SRP $17.00*
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11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

PREMIERE400(STRATHMORE)

400 Series Full Trim Format

400 Series already has a very serious history. Comic Book Boards 400 series is printed on the finest art paper available, **Strathmore**. Like the rest of the Blue Line products the 400 Series is preprinted with a non-photo blue border that allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals draw.

• **S400 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% acid free bristol. This Strathmore board is ideal for detailed ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
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- **ITEM#** BL1043 SMOOTH 2-PLY *SRP $19.00*
- **ITEM#** BL1045 SMOOTH 3-PLY *SRP $28.00*

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500 Series Full Trim Format

500 series comic book boards is the top of the line for art paper. Strathmore 500 is 100% cotton fiber, Acid free and unsurpassed for fine pen and pencil work.

• **500 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board. This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.
- **ITEM#** BL1047 SMOOTH 2-PLY *SRP $41.00*
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PRO COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS
FULL TRIM FORMAT

Blue Line has taken the quality paper that they have used in the "Pro" pages for years and printed a newly designed Full Trim border format in non-photo blue ink.

This offering the artist the quality of Pro pages with an advanced page border.

In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.

Use pencil, ink (brush recommened), markers, wash, acrylics.
- **ITEM#** BL1038 *SRP $15.95*
24 pages per pack.
11" x 17" 3-ply brite art boards with a 15 3/4' x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo border printed/ bagged

PRO COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS
TRADITIONAL FORMAT

Pro Comic Book Boards brite white surface offers a smooth surface to pencils and inking with a brush literally glides across the surface (quill pen not recommended). Pro has offered thousands of artist the opportunity to begin their careers on a pre-printed boards like

the professional publisher uses.
Traditional Format has the original 10" x 15" image border with panel markers for a traditional page layout.

Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15". In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.

Use pencil, ink (brush recommened), markers, wash, acrylics.
- **ITEM#** BL1001 *SRP $15.95*
24 pages per pack.
11" x 17" 3- ply brite art boards with a 10" x 15" non-photo image printed and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo image printed/ bagged.

COMIC BOOK BOARDS

(*Traditional Format*)

Comic Book Boards are specifically laid out with an image area for standard comic book designs. These boards like the other comic book boards offer an area to write the name of the book the artist is drawing, issue number, page number and date. This helps to keep track of your boards and where they belong. Double page spreads are a snap for an artist. Just take two comic book boards and then butt the sides together, apply tape down the back of those boards and then the artist is ready to illustrate a double-page drawing. Fast and easy with no cutting. They are 24 pages of Brite Art Index. Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15".

Use pencil, ink (brush), marker, wash.
- **ITEM#** BL1003 *SRP $12.95*
24 pages per pack.
11" x 17" pages with a 10" x 15' non-photo image/ bagged

COMIC BOOK COVER SHEETS

These Comic Book Cover Sheets, show a border for your drawing with pre-marked bleeds for trimming with an area for the possible placement for the book's logo and company information clearly marked. This helps to keep all of the important elements of the covers from being covered up when the book logo and company info are placed later. They are 12 pages of 2-ply premium Brite art index board that come bagged and feature non-photo blue ink. Page size is 11" x 17" with an image area of 10 3/4" x 16".
- **ITEM#** BL1007 *SRP $9.95*
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" art pages printed with a 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo blue border printed/ bagged.
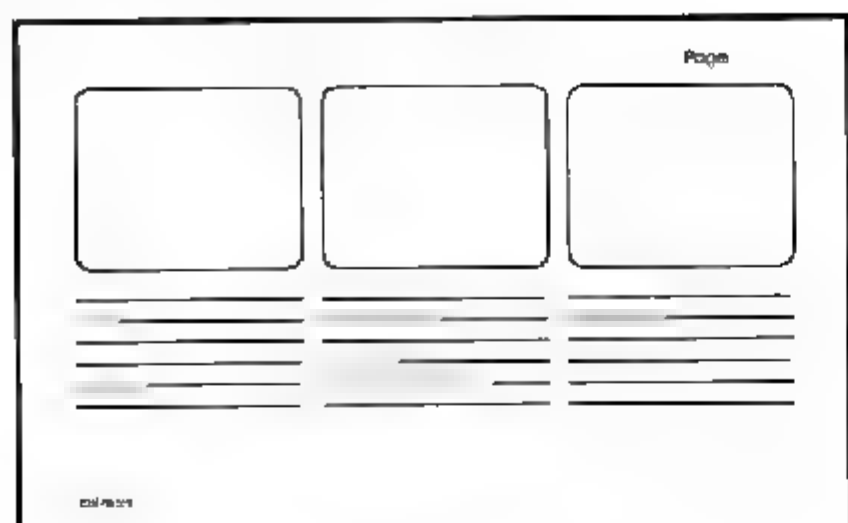
STORYBOARD TEMPLATES

Animators and Storyboard artist! Blue Line Storyboard Templates offers animators and writers a quick and easy way to show movement and sequences of a story or animation.

Storyboard Templates have three large panels with lines below each for detailed art and storytelling.

- **ITEM# BL1018** *SRP $13.95*

100 sheets of 60 lb. 8 1/2 x 14 pages with 3 panels padded with colored cover.

COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS

Blue Line Pro COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS offer comic strip illustrators an easy and time saving way to create professional looking comic strips. Printed on Blue Line Pro's Premiere (Strathmore) 300 series smooth with a non photo blue border. Daily comic strip borders measure 4 1/16" x 13". This offers the illustrator the ability to reduce the original at a 44% reduction to the standard daily strip size. Sunday comic strip borders have two sizes: the first is a large format of 5 3/8" x 11 1/2" and the second format of 3 3/4" x 11 1/2". The Sunday strips are drawn at the size they are published and usual have two rows of panels. Each strip offers basic border formats for four and three panels and Sundays allow for additional rows.

BLP COMIC STRP ART BOARDS 12 Daily Comic Strips and 2 Sunday Comic Strips.

- **ITEM # BL1052** *SRP #12.95*
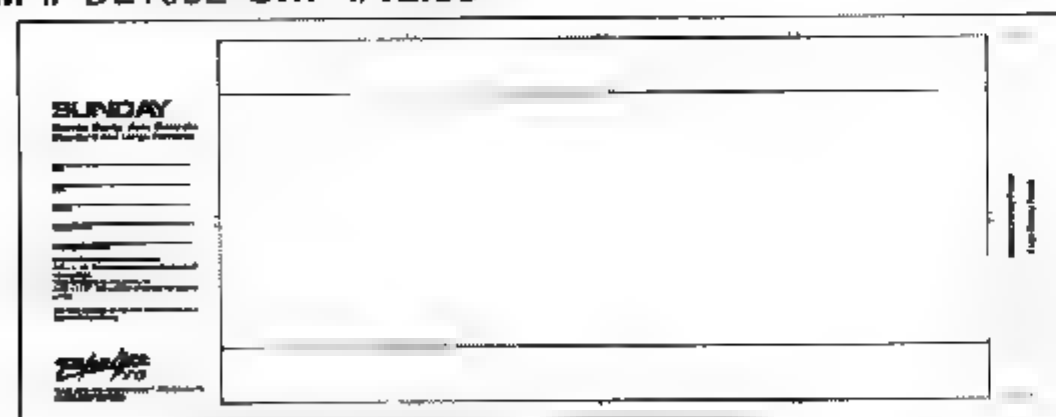
POCKET SKETCH PAD

50 pages of heavy illustration board to carry around in your pocket to have ready when your hit with a revolutionary vision. Great for quick sketches and designs. Featuring Blue Line's quality illustration paper.

Great for pencilling, inking and washes.

50 pages / 5" x 9 1/2" / padded / two-color cover

- **Item # BL1051** *SRP $5.95*

LAYOUT PAGES

Comic Book Layout Pages uses premium bond paper and printed in non-photo blue, of course, features markings to layout four thumbnails per sheet to detail your comic book page ideas and room for notations and other information.

Used for story boarding your comic book story. A geat tool for artists or wrters to work out details for the story along with layouts of pages.

- **ITEM# BL1005** *SRP $8.95*

30 8 1/2" x 11" pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.
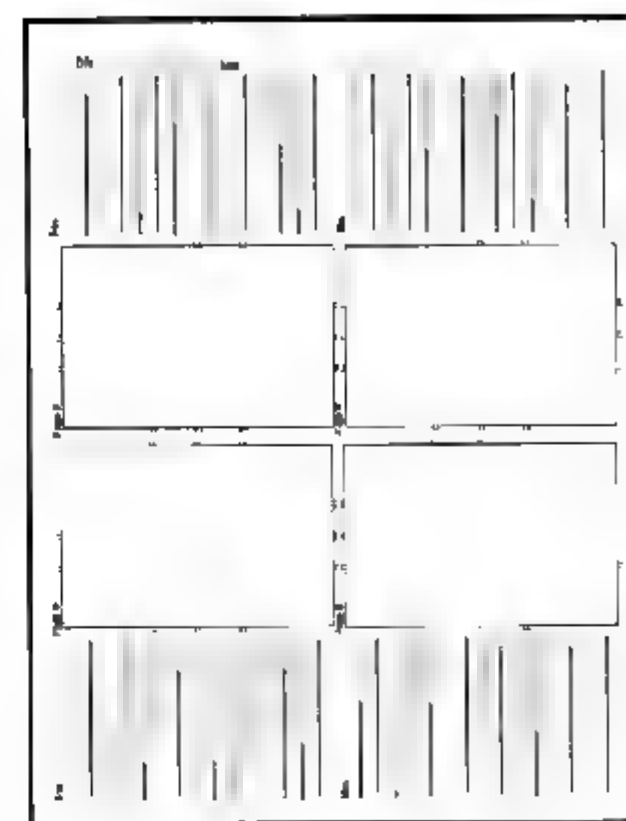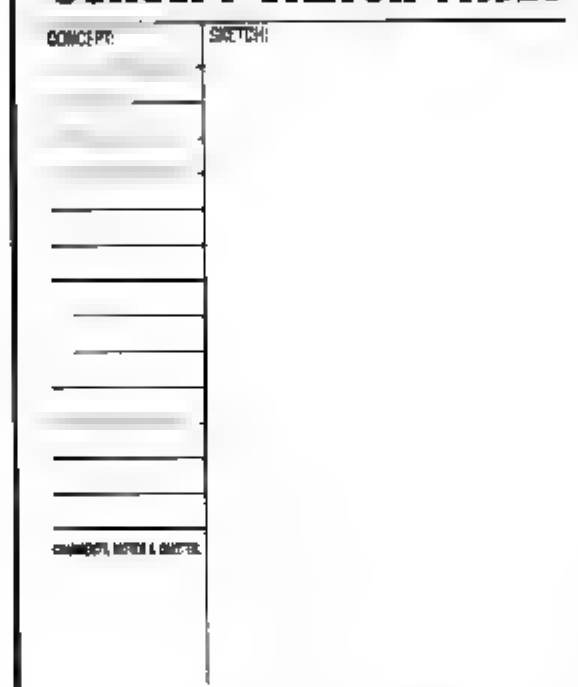
CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES

Record and organize your creative ideas on a convenient, quality art board. Concept Sketch Pages are made from premium index board featuring non-photo blue ink so that the artist can ink his illustrations on a non-repro surface. Concept Sketch Pages offer an image area for an illustrator to draw a character scene or anything. And, it also gives room for written information to be included with the artwork. This is handy when a character is designed for a comic book and you want to include his bo, powers, etc., or a Role Playing character you're playing. These pages can easily be hole punched and inserted into a binder. A character template is even included for quick and easy character creations!

- **ITEM# BL1004** *SRP $8.95*

25 art pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.

BLUE LINE SAMPLER II

If you haven't tried Blue Line products, here's your chance! The Blue Line Sampler includes 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. All in non-photo blue, of course! That's 25 pages of five different Blue Line products! Check out all Blue Line and Blue Line Pro products in one fell swoop!

- **ITEM# BL1040** *SRP $13.95*

25 pages of 8 different Blue Line products. 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. 25 pages per pack.
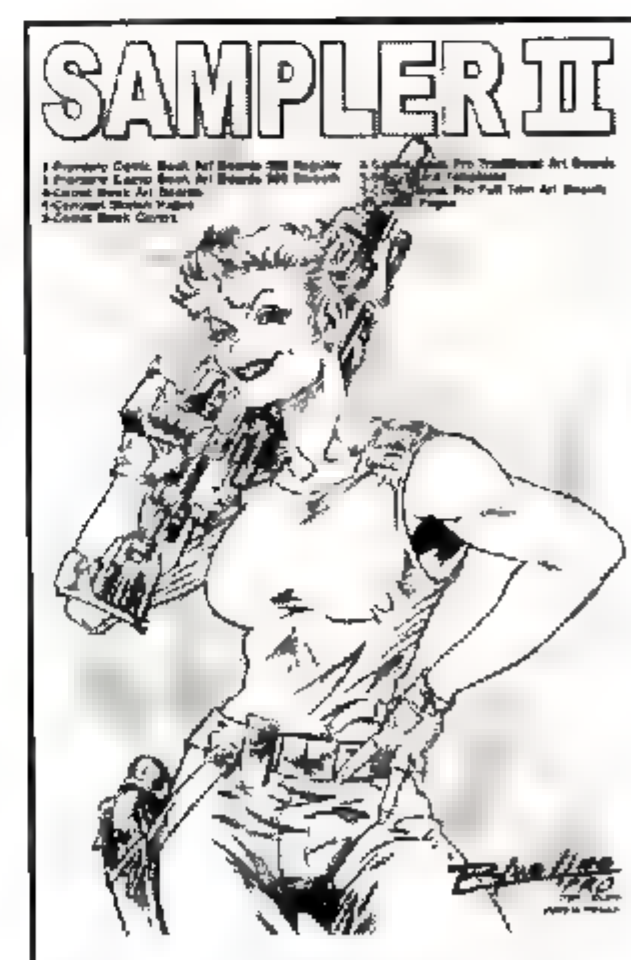
BLUE LINE COMIC BOOK LETTERING FONT

SERIES 1

BLCOMIC FONT:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

Blue Line now offers creators an inexpensive lettering font

BLCOMIC font is formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. **BLSFX** is a special effects font with pre-created sound effects that are ready for you to drop into place.

Also included is user configurable word balloons in eps format.

Blue Line Pro's Comic Book Font Vol. 1
- ITEM# BL1019 - *SRP $19.95*

SERIES 2

DIGITALCARTOON-Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?: . . (0 {}]/ $ +=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?. : . (0 {}]/ $ +=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Italic Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?. : . (0 {}]/ $ +=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?: . . (0 {}]/ $ +=-

SACREDBLUE-Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?. , , . (' ' []]/ * '+—
SACREDBLUE-Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?. , , . (' ' []]/ * '+—
SACREDBLUE-Italic Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?. , , . (' ' []]/ * '+—
SACREDBLUE-Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?. , , . (' ' []]/ * '+—

Blue Line Pro's Vol. 2 of inexpensive lettering font.

BLDIGITALCARTOON and **BLSACREDBLUE** fonts are formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. Also included is user configurable word balloons in eps format.

Blue Line Pro Comic Book Fonts Vol.2
- ITEM# BL2002 - *SRP $19.95*

SKETCH BOOK SERIES

Blue Line offers two different sizes of Sketch Books. A Regular 8 1/2" x 11" size and the Traditional 11" x 17" size both are filled with 200 pages of 70 lb. art paper. Both have hard covers with library quality stitch binding for durability and makes it easier to draw without an art table.

SKETCH BOOK REGULAR (8 1/2" x 11")

This standard sized hard covered book offers anyone with the ability to pick up a pencil the opportunity to draw. An artist could create their own library of sketches. Great for when you don't want to carry a sketch board around or your just sitting around with your friends. Also a good way to collect artist signatures and sketches at conventions!
- Item #BL1010 / 200 pg. Hard cover book. *SRP $24.95*

SKETCH BOOK TRADITIONAL (11" x 17")

This Sketch Book offers the artist the ability to draw the size they're going to draw their original comic book pages.
- Item #BL1011 / 200 pg. Hard cover book. *SRP $27.95*
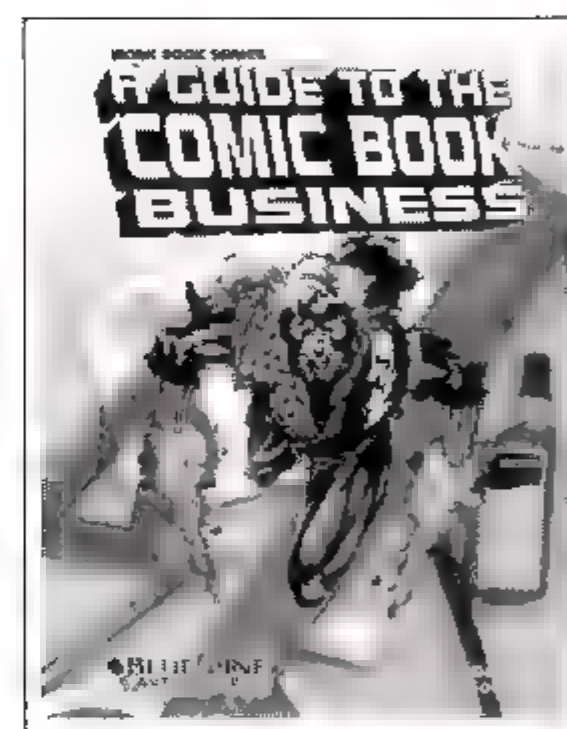
BLUE LINE: A GUIDE TO THE COMIC BOOK BUSINESS

Every fan who reads comics has at one time or another felt the urge to join in on the fun, to take a more active role, to become a player instead of a spectator. In short, to create. You have the desire, now you need a plan.

That's where Blue Line's A Guide To The Comic Book Business comes in. It covers all of the basics for starting and maintaining a successful career in the comic book industry. It doesn't matter if your skills lie in penciling or management, this book tells you what to do to turn your hobby into a paid profession.

The first chapter gets you up-to-date on how the industry is set up. It gives you the basic information necessary to be a knowledgeable participant in the comics field. Next how to go about creating your own comics. You'll discover proven methods for making yourself an outstanding candidate. Then, we take a look at other jobs in the industry outside of the creative aspect for all of you wannabe corporate types. Chapter five deals with that small but growing niche of the industry - the small press and self publisher. We clue you in on effective ways to advertise and promote your work so that you can actually make money off of your talents.

So, for everyone who's ever dreamed of being on the other side of the table at a comic convention, doodled more in class notebooks than actually taking notes, this book is for you.

Written by Daniel Souder. Edited by Bob Hickey.
- ITEM# BL1039 *SRP $17.95*
90 pages / b&w with full color cover. Spiral bound

CREATE YOUR OWN COMIC BOOK!

Blue Line has developed a simple and inexpensive step by step to create your very first comic book, that's fun, easy and comprehensive. A box set of Blue Line products that aid a person in making their own comic! It includes 1 Character Template, 6 Concept Sketch Pages, 6 Comic Book Layout Pages, 24 Comic Book Pages, 1 Comic Book Cover Sheet and a 24 page instructional comic book.

- ITEM# BL1002   *SRP $21.95*
Box Set. 37 art pages / 24 page b&w instructional comic book / full color die cut box / shrink wrapped.

INDIA INK

• Higgens Black India Ink
A non-clogging ink for lettering pens and brushes. Opaque semi-gloss black finish and waterproof
- *AR-4415 Black Ink*
(Higgins) 1oz. $3.00
- *AR-EF44011 Black Magic Ink (Higgins) 1oz $3.50*

Higgins Waterproof Black Magic Ink is non-corrosive, free flowing, and non-clogging. Great for use on tracing vellum and other film surfaces

• Pelikan Drawing Ink
One of the finest drawing ink available. Pelikan ink is great with technical pens, graphic and line art papers or tracing cloth
- *AR-PE211862 Black India Ink (Pelikan) 1oz $4.75*
- *AR-PE211169 Black India Ink (Pelikan, 8oz $18.75*

• Pelikan "T" Ink
Permanent and completely waterproof. Good with matte-surfaces or waterproof tracing cloth
- *AR-PE221374 Black Ink Pelikan "T" 1oz $6.00*

• KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH INK
Rapidograph Ink. Black, opaque ink for drafting film, paper and tracing cloth. For use with Koh-I Noor Rapidograph Pens
- *AR-3084-FI Koh-I-Noor Ink $3.95*

• WHITE OUT
FW Acrylic Artist Waterproof White Ink. Great for use with technical pens, brushes, and dip pens.
- *A-R-FW-O11 FW White Acrylic Artist Ink $ 5.00*

BRUSHES
• Winsor/Newton Series 7
Made with Kolinsky sable with traditional black handle. Great brush
- *AR-5007001 Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#1 $18.95*
- *AR 5007002 Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#2 $22.95*
- *AR-5007003 Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#3 $36.75*

Round Brushes
Made with natural Sable with excellent edges and points for precise strokes.
- *AR-NB-38-0 Round Brush Size #0 $3.00*
- *AR-NB-38-1 Round Brush Size #1 $3.25*
- *AR-NB-38-2 Round Brush Size #2 $3.95*
- *AR-056009016 Round Brush Size#3 $3.95*

PENCILS & QUILL PENS
• Non-Photo Blue Pencil
Makes marks not appear when artwork is reproduced. Very useful
- *AR-761-5 Non-photo Blue Pencil $.60*

• Quill Inking Pen
Quill Pens offers super-fine flexible point. Used by many professional inkers.
- *AR-H9432 Quill Inking Pen #102 (Tip & Holder) $2.25*
- *AR-H9402 12 Crow Quill #102 Tips (Inking Pen Nibs only) $13.95*

ERASERS
• Kneaded Eraser
Gray soft bendable eraser used for pencil and charcoal.
- *AR-1224 Kneaded Rubber Eraser Large $1.15*

• Eraser Pencils
Peel off wrap ideal for detail erasing.
- *AR-400 Eraser Pencils $1.15*
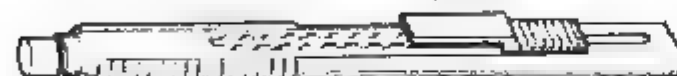
• Pentel Clic
Pen style holder, retract as needed.
- *AR-ZE-21C Pentel Clic Eraser/Holder $1.95*
- *AR-ZER-2 Pentel Refill Erasers $1.75*

• Erasing Shield
Metal shield with different sizes and shapes.
- *AR-FT-5370 Erasing Shield $1.10*

PENCIL SHARPNER
Canister Sharpener offers metal blades with high impact plastic container.
- *AR-MR906 Canister Sharper $3.95*

• ALVIN PENSTIX
Graphic waterproof drawing pen offering India Ink density. Black permanent drawing ink
- *AR-4013-EEF 0.3mm $1.55*
- *AR-4017-F 0.7mm $1.55*
- *AR-4015-EF 0.5mm $1.55*

• Penstix Set
Includes all 3 Pentrix Sizes
- *AR-4033 3mm 7mm 5mm $4.45*

• Penstix Drawing/Sketching Markers
Offers maximum India drawing ink like density. Black waterproof permanent ink.
- *AR-3013-EEF 0.3mm ExEx Fine $1.55*
- *AR-3015-EF 0.5mm Ex Fine $1.55*
- *AR-3017-F 0.7mm Fine $1.55*

• Pentrix Drawing/Sketching Marker Set
Set of all 3 sizes
- *AR-3033 Set of 3 3, 5, 7mm $4.45*

• SAKURA PIGMA BRUSH
Archival performance with flexible brush style nib. Very fine lines or broad strokes. Water/chem. proof + fade resistant.
- *AR-XSDK BR-49 Black $3.00*

ALVIN DRAWING PEN/MARKERS
• Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/Markers
Permanent waterproof ink that dries instantly. Nibs set in stainless steel sleeves for protection
- *AR-TL01 0.1mm $1.95*
- *AR-TL02 0.2mm $1.95*
- *AR-TL03 0.3mm $1.95*
- *AR-TL04 0.4mm $1.95*
- *AR-TL05 0.5mm $1.95*

Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/Markers Sets
- *AR-TLP5 set of 5 (all sizes above) $9.50*
- *AR-TLP3 set of 3 (1, 3, 5mm) $5.75*

KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH PENS
Rapidograph Pens are made of impact and chemical-resistant components for drawing and specialty inks. Good balance and self-polishing stainless steel points.
- *AR-3165-06/0 Tech Pen Size 6x0 (13mm) $27.00*
- *AR-3165-04/0 Tech Pen Size 4x0 (18mm) $27.00*
- *AR-3165-03/0 Tech Pen Size 3x0 (25mm) $22.00*
- *AR-3165-02/0 Tech Pen Size 2x0 (3mm) $22.00*
- *AR-3165-01/0 Tech Pen Size #0 (35mm) $22.00*
- *AR-3165-01 Tech Pen Size #1 (5mm) $22.00*
- *AR-3165-02 Tech Pen Size #2 (6mm) $22.00*
- *AR-3165-03 Tech Pen Size #3 (8mm) $22.00*
- *AR-3165-04 Tech Pen Size #4 (1mm) $22.00*
- *AR-3165-06 Tech Pen Size #6 (1.4mm) $22.00*
- *AR-3165-07 Tech Pen Size #7 (2mm) $22.00*

MECHANICAL PENCIL
Berol Mechanical Pencil is precision made w/button lead release and light aluminum barrel.
• Mechanical Pencil 2mm.
- *AR-BP10C $6.95*
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. HB
- *AR-BP2375-HB $10.50*
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2H
- *AR-BP2375-2H $10.50*
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2B
- *AR-SA02263-2B $10.50*
• 12-Non-Photo Blue Leads-2mm.
- *AR-BP2376-NPB $10.50*

• Mechanical Pencil Sharpener
Provides professional point for standard leads
- *AR-BP14C Pencil Shapener (Mech. Pencil) $10.75*

• SHARPIE MARKERS
Permanent markers with high intensity ink. Quick drying
- *AR-SA37101 Ultra Fine Black $1.30*
- *AR-SA35101 Extra Fine Black $1.30*
- *AR-SA30101 Regular Black $1.30*
- *AR-SA33101 Super Sharpie $1.95*
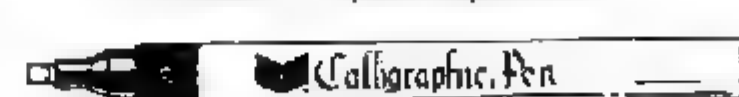
• METALLIC PENS
Offers high quality metallic ink. Great for autographs
- *AR-SA46115 Gold Pen $4.50*
- *AR-SA46120 Silver Pen $4.50*

• CHINA MARKING PENCILS
Offers moisture resistant, non-toxic odor-free pigments. Self Sharpening. Offered as a dozen or singles.

AR-173T Dozen Black	$10.75
AR-173T-1 Single Black	$.95
AR-164T Dozen White	$10.75
AR-164T-1 Single White	$.95

• Sakura Pigma Micron
Available in six point sizes. Waterproof, chemical proof and fade resistant and will not smear or feather when dry

-AR-XSK005-49	.20mm, black	$2.95
-AR-XSK01-49	.25mm, black	$2.95
-AR-XSK02-49	.30mm black	$2.95
-AR-XSK03-49	.35mm black	$2.95
-AR-XSK05-49	.45mm, black	$2.95
-AR-XSK08-49	.50mm black	$2.95
-AR-30061	3-pk , .25, .35, .45mm	$8.00
-AR-30062	All sizes black	$16.00

• Sandpaper Pointer
Idea for pointing pencils, leads, charcoal and crayons by hand.
-AR-3435-1 Sandpaper Pointer $.95

MAGIC RUB
BY SANFORD. 1954

• Magic-Rub Eraser
Eraser especially developed for sensitive surfaces, will not mark or smudge.
-AR-1954FC-1 Magic-Rub Eraser $.95

• Blending Stumps
Soft paper felt with double pointed ends used for blending charcoal, pastels. etc. Use sandpaper to repoint.

-AR-T811-1 ¼" x 5 ¼"	$.50
-AR-T812-1 5/16" x 6"	$.75
-AR-T813-1 13/32" x 6"	$1.00
-AR-T814-1 15/32" x 6"	$1.25
-AR-T817-1 5/8" x 6"	$1.50

• WORKABLE FIXATIF *(Krylon)*
Provides lasting protection. Prevents smudging. dusting and wrinkling
Workable Fixatif
- *AR-KR1306 $8.95*

T-SQUARES

• **Plastic T-squares** *offering flexible plastic with both metric and standard measurements*
- **AR-HX02** *Plastic 12"* $3 95
- **AR-NBA18** *Plastic 18"* $7 95
- **AR-NBA24** *Plastic 24"* $10 95

• **Aluminum T-squares** *offering hard tempered aluminum blade riveted to a rugged plastic head*
- **AR-FR63-112** *Aluminum 12"* $10.95
- **AR-FR63-118** *Aluminum 18"* $12.95
- **AR-FR63-124** *Aluminum 24"* $13 95

TRIANGLES

High quality triangles made of .080" acrylic. Raised inking edges. Great for Inkers.

• **30" x 60"W/ Inking Edge**
- **AR-1204-60** *Triangle 30"x60" 4 inch* $3.50
- **AR-1206-60** *Triangle 30"x60" 6 inch* $4.50
- **AR-1208-60** *Triangle 30"x60" 8 inch* $5.50
- **AR-1210-60** *Triangle 30"x60" 10 inch* $6.50
- **AR-1212-60** *Triangle 30" x60" 12 inch* $8.50
- **AR-1214-60** *Triangle 30"x60" 14 inch* $10.50

• **45" X 90"W/ Inking Edge**
- **AR-1204-45** *Triangle 45"x90" 4 inch* $4.50
- **AR-1206-45** *Triangle 45"x90" 6 inch* $5.50
- **AR-1208-45** *Triangle 45"x90" 8 inch* $7.50
- **AR-1210-45** *Triangle 45"x90" 10 inch* $9.50
- **AR-1212-45** *Triangle 45"x90" 12 inch* $13.50

COMPASS SET

Geometry set includes ruler, compass, two triangles, protractor, eraser, and sharpener

• **8-piece Geometry Set**
- **AR-HX18807** $4 95
• **8-Piece Geometry Set** *(brass compass)*
- **AR-723405** $7 95
• **Basic Geometry Set**
4-piece Geometry Set (Ruler, 12" protractor, 30/60 + 45/90 triangles)
- **AR-FL03** $5 95
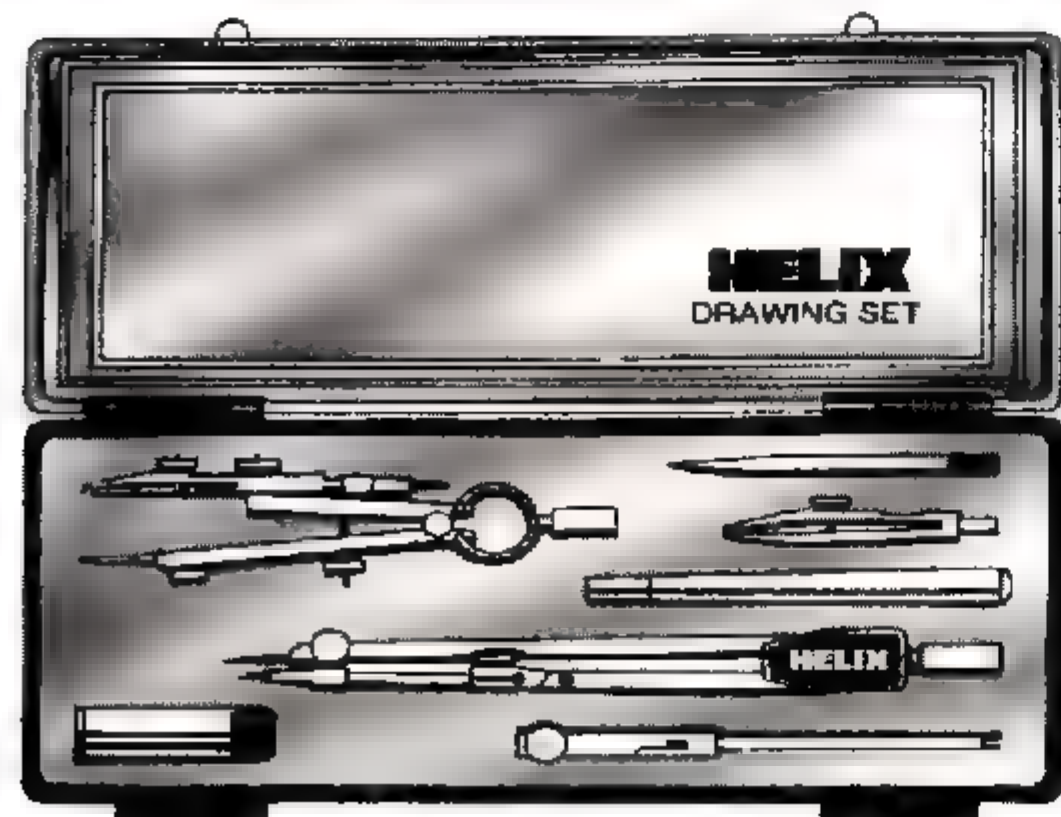
• **Basic Combination Compass**
6-piece compass set. side-screw bow compass knee joint compass, extension bar, spare leads, 2" divider point and a lead pointer
- **AR-S61** *Set* $15.95

• **Compass Set**
6-piece drawing set contains Small side screw compass, 5 ½" self-centering knee joint compass/divider extension bar, technical pen adapter, divider point and lead pointer
- **ARHLX01330-01330** Set $16 95
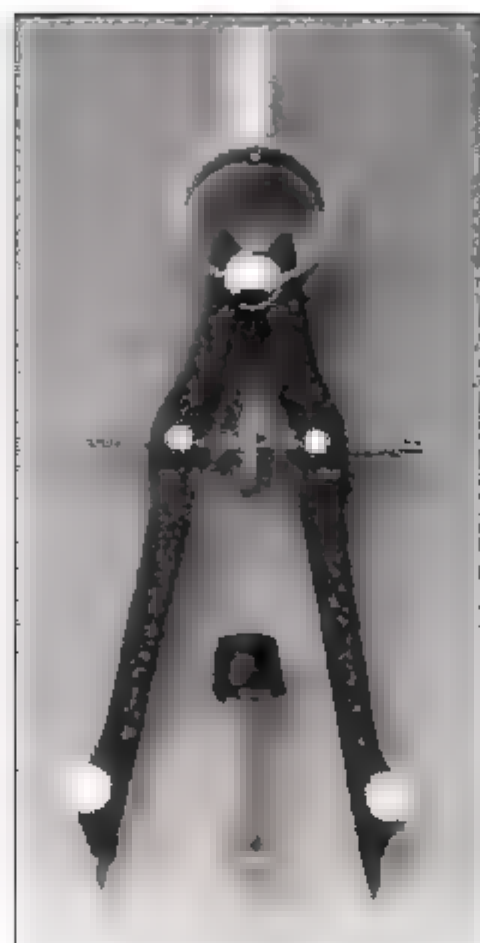
• **5" Bow Compass & Divider**
An all metal construction compass with replaceable needle and lead. Makes accurate 8" diameter circles. Extra pivot point for use as a divider
- **AR-494** 5" Bow Compass $ 4 95

• **14 Piece Drafting Kit**
Drafting Kit includes 12 architectural scale, 12x16 vinyl pouch. lettering guide pad, 6" compass, 6" divider, 10" 30/60 triangle, 8" 45/90 triangle, 6" protractor, 6 ¾ french curve, soft pencil eraser, lead holder, mini lead pointer, erasing shield and a three pack of 2.0mm lead
- **AR-BDK-1A** 15 Piece Drafting Kit $38.95

RULERS

• **Stainless Steel Rulers** *offering flexible steel with non skid cork backing.*
- **AR-200-12** *Steel Ruler 12 inch Cork Backing* $5.95
- **AR-200-18** *Steel Ruler 18 inch Cork Backing* $6 95

• **Plastic Ruler** *1 inch with 1/16" markings and metric markings.*
- **AR-C36** *Ruler 12" (plastic ruler)* $1.25
- **AR-18** *Ruler 6" (plastic ruler)* $ 50
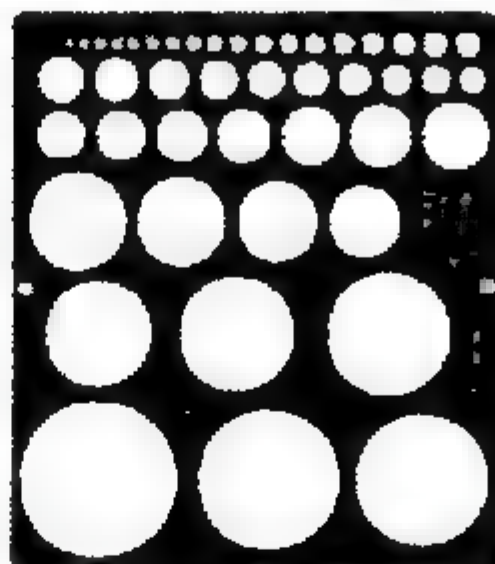
CIRCLE TEMPLATES / FRENCH CURVES / ELLIPSE TEMPLATES

• *Circle Templates*
Metric and standard. Risers for smear-free drawing. (Great for Inkers)
• **Large Circles**
- **AR-13001** $7.95
• **Extra Large Circles**
- **AR-13011** $6 95

• *French Curves (Inking Edge)*
- **AR-9000** *Set* $6 95
• *Ellipse Temps.*
- **AR-PK12691** $12.00
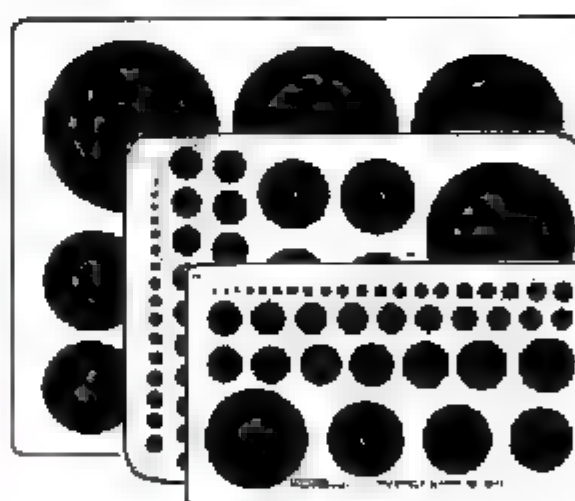
• **Circle Templates Set of 3**
This set of 3 templates provides ninety-eight different circles and edge scales in 50th 16th and 10th as well as mm and centering lines. Sizes ranging from 1/32 inches to 3 ½ inches.
- **ITEM #AR-TD404** *SRP* *$17 95*

• **Ellipse Template**
- **AR-PK12691** $12.00
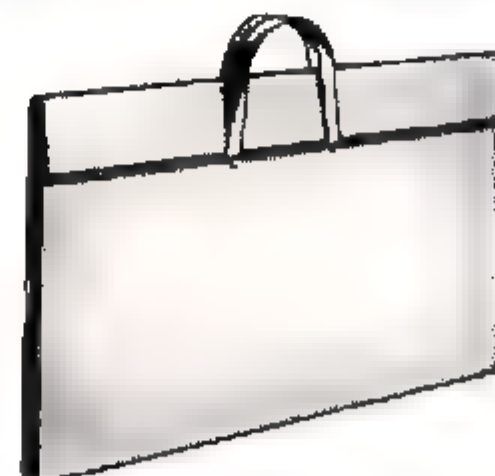
• **POCKET PORTFOLIO**
- **AR-FL419WH** *Pocket Portfolio 14 x 20* $10.50

STORAGE BOXES

• **Sketch Pac** *2-sided safe storing box 12 3/8" x 4 ¼" X 1 ¾"*
- **AR-6880AB** $12 95

• **One Tray Art Bin** *13" x 7 ¼" x5 ¾", Elevated tray for viewing of supplies in bottom bin. Tight Latch*
- **AR-6843AC** *black* $15 25

DRAFTSMAN BRUSH

Removes shavings from paper Cleaning without fear of smudging
• **Draftsman Brush (cleaning paper)**
- **AR-FT5391** $6 00

XACTO KNIFE

Rubberized barrel. Rear-release mechanism with safety cap
• **Xacto Knife**
- **AR-XA3626** $5.25
Xacto Refill Blades #1
- **AR-OLKB** $6 50

RUBBER CEMENT

Contact adhesive for paste-up and other graphic art uses.
• **Rubber Cement 4oz.**
- **AR-BT138** $3 50
• **Rubber Cement Quart**
- **AR-BT102** $13.25
• **Rubber Cement Thinner Pint**
- **AR-BT201** $8 50
• **Rubber Cement Pick-Up (eraser)**
- **AR-BT700** $1.50

COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART SLEEVES

Protect your original Art Work
• **Comic Book Original Art Sleeves**
11 ½" x 19" Polyethylene (3.0 mil)
- **AR-BAG 1119-25** 25 Bags $7 50
- **AR-BAG 1119-100** 100 Bag $25 00

• 12" Unisex Wooden Mannequin
Human Adult figure mannequin with perfect proportions, adjustable joints for posing. Great for modeling proportions involving angles. Made from carved hardwood, 12" in height.
-AR-CW201 12" Model   *SRP* $19.95

• Hand Mannequins
Life-like hardwood hand mannequins are fully articulated. Comes in three sizes, male, female and child
-AR-HM3 14" Male Hand   SRP $49.95
-AR-HM4 12" Female Hand   SRP $46.95
-AR-HM5 9" Child Hand   SRP $42.95

• LIGHTWEIGHT SKETCH BOARDS
Made of strong, tempered masonite with cutout carry handle. Metal clips and rubber band (included) hold paper securely in place
-AR-SB1819 18 ½" X 19 ½"   SRP $9.95
-AR-SB2326 23 ½" X 26"   SRP $12.95

• PRESENTATION CASES (PORTFOLIO)
Spine mounted handle allows pages to hang properly to avoid wrinkling. Features 1" black superior quality rings (Does not snag pages). Includes 10 archival pages (#ZX)
-AR-S1-2171 17" x 14"   SRP $68.95
-AR-S1-2241 24" x 18"   SRP $110.50
Refill Pages for Presentation Case
-AR-ZX17 17" x 14" 10 pack   SRP $23.95
-AR-ZX24 24" x 18" 10 pack   SRP $45.95

• KOH-I-NOOR ELECTRIC ERASER

• ALL PURPOSE ELECTRIC SYSTEM
Designed to erase both lead and ink from paper and film. Features a heavy-duty, maintenance free 115v motor, protected by a high-impact white LEXAN case. Maximum efficiency with either the No. 287 white vinyl strip eraser for paper or the specially formulated no. 285 imbibed yellow strip eraser for film. Includes a No. 287 strip eraser
-AR-2800E All purpose Electric System
SRP $73.95

• ALVIN ELECTRIS ERASER
Durable, high-quality UL-listed unit. Uses of a full 7" eraser eliminates the annoyance of stopping constantly during heavy workload periods to insert short erasers. Unbreakable LEXAN casing fits the hand comfortably and can be hung by a convenient ring. The heavy duty AC motor eliminates the continual repair problems of typical lightweight erasers. Motor cooling vent locations are designed to allow cool operation even under heaviest workloads
-AR-EE1754 With slip-chuck   SRP $85.00
• ERASER REFILLS
-AR-ER72 7" dark grey, ink, 1 doz.   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER73 7" white pencil, 1 doz.   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER74 7" pink pencil, 1 doz.   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER88 7" white vinyl, ink or pencil 1 doz.   SRP $6.95

• KOH-I-NOOR ERASER REFILLS
-AR-ER285 Yellow, imbibed, ink 10/box   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER287 Soft Vinyl, pencil, 10/box   SRP $5.95

• CORDLESS/RECHARGEABLE ERASER
Contains a trouble-free motor that delivers up to 4,500 rpm, fully charged. Versatile two-way operation —cordless or AC. Long lasting rechargeable battery, break resistant LEXAN case. Lightweight, portable recharging stand power pack, plus a No. 287 vinyl strip eraser
-AR-2850C Cordless, Rechargeable   SRP $96.95

PRISMACOLOR

- All Colors are available!
- All Singles $3.30
• Metallic: single nib
- *AR-PM117 (Broad) Metallic Silver*
- *AR-PM118 (Fine) Metallic Silver*
- *AR-PM119 (Broad) Metallic Gold*
- *AR-PM120 (Fine) Metallic Gold*
- All Metallic Singles $3.30
PRISMACOLOR SETS
• Primary/Secondary 12-Set
Includes: AR-PM. 50, 19, 15, 57, 6, 4, 32, 44, 53, 31, 61, and 9
-AR-BP12N $40 00
• Cool Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12P $40 00
• Warm Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12Q $40 00
• French Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12R $40 00
• Prismacolor 24 set
-AR-BP24S $79.25
• Prismacolor 48 set
-AR-BP48S $158.50
• Prismacolor 72 set
-AR-BP72S $238.00
• Prismacolor 120 set
-AR-BP120S $394.00
• Prismacolor 144 set
-AR-BP144S $470 00
• Empty Studio Marker Stacker
-AR-STUDIO $18 00
• Prismacolor 24 set w/hard carrying case
-AR-BP24C $90.00
• Prismacolor 48 set w/hard carrying case
-AR-BP48C $170.00

- All Colors are available!
- AR-PM1 Process Red
- AR-PM4 Crimson Red
- AR-PM5 Scarlet Laxe
- AR-PM6 Carmine Red
- AR-PM7 Magenta
- AR-PM8 Pink
- AR-PM10 Blush Pink
- AR-PM11 Deco Pink
- AR-PM12 Light Pink
- AR-PM13 Poppy Red
- AR-PM14 Pale Vermilion
- AR-PM15 Yellowed Orange
- AR-PM16 Orange
- AR-PM17 Sunburst Yellow
- AR-PM18 Yellow Ochre
- AR-PM19 Canary Yellow
- AR-PM21 Tulip Yellow
- AR-PM23 Cream
- AR-PM24 Yellow Chartreuse
- AR-PM25 Spring Green
- AR-PM26 Lt Olive Green
- AR-PM27 Chartreuse
- AR-PM28 Olive Green
- AR-PM31 Dark Green
- AR-PM32 Parrot Green
- AR-PM33 Hunter Green
- AR-PM36 Lime Green
- AR-PM37 Aquemarine
- AR-PM38 Teal Blue
- AR-PM39 True Blue
- AR-PM40 Copenhagan Blue
- AR-PM42 Violet Blue
- AR-PM43 Indigo Blue
- AR-PM44 Ultramarine
- AR-PM45 Navy Blue
- AR-PM46 Light Aqua
- AR-PM47 Non-photo Blue
- AR-PM48 Lt. Cerulean Blue
- AR-PM50 Violet
- AR-PM51 Black Grape
- AR-PM53 Mulberry
- AR-PM55 Rhodamine
- AR-PM59 Lavender
- AR-PM60 Violet Mist

- AR-PM61 Dark Umber
- AR-PM62 Sepia
- AR-PM65 Sienna Brown
- AR-PM69 Goldenrod
- AR-PM70 Sand
- AR-PM71 Buff
- AR-PM72 Eggshell
- AR-PM73 Flagstone Red
- AR-PM78 Brick Beige
- AR-PM79 Brick White
- AR-PM80 Putty
- AR-PM82 Terra Cotta
- AR-PM86 Cherry
- AR-PM88 Dark Brown
- AR-PM89 Light Walnut
- AR-PM90 Walnut
- AR-PM93 Burnt Ochre
- AR-PM95 Light Tan
- AR-PM96 Blond Wood
- AR-PM97 Warm Black
- AR-PM98 Black
- AR-PM99 Warm Grey 10%
- AR-PM100 Warm Grey 20%
- AR-PM101 Warm Grey 30%
- AR-PM102 Warm Grey 40%
- AR-PM103 Warm Grey 50%
- AR-PM104 Warm Grey 60%
- AR-PM105 Warm Grey 70%
- AR-PM106 Warm Grey 80%
- AR-PM107 Warm Grey 90%
- AR-PM108 Cool Grey 10%
- AR-PM109 Cool Grey 20%
- AR-PM110 Cool Grey 30%
- AR-PM111 Cool Grey 40%
- AR-PM112 Cool Grey 50%
- AR-PM113 Cool Grey 60%
- AR-PM114 Cool Grey 70%
- AR-PM115 Cool Grey 80%
- AR-PM116 Cool Grey 90%
- AR-PM122 Salmon Pink
- AR-PM123 Spanish Orange
- AR-PM124 Limepool
- AR-PM125 Peacock Blue
- AR-PM126 Cerulean Blue
- AR-PM127 Imperial Violet
- AR-PM128 Parma Violet
- AR-PM129 Dahlia Purple
- AR-PM130 Deco Orange
- AR-PM131 Deco Yellow
- AR-PM132 Jasmine
- AR-PM133 Deco Pink
- AR-PM134 Deco Blue
- AR-PM135 Deco Green
- AR-PM136 Deco Aqua
- AR-PM137 Clay Rose
- AR-PM138 Pink Rose
- AR-PM140 Celadon Green
- AR-PM141 Jade Green
- AR-PM142 Brittany Blue
- AR-PM143 Mediterranean Blue
- AR-PM144 Cloud Blue
- AR-PM145 Blue Slate
- AR-PM146 Periwinkle
- AR-PM147 Greyed Lavender
- AR-PM148 Cornflower
- AR-PM149 Bronze
- AR-PM150 Mahogany Red
- AR-PM151 Raspberry
- AR-PM152 Henna
- AR-PM153 Pumpkin Orange
- AR-PM154 Mineral Orange
- AR-PM155 French Grey 10%
- AR-PM156 French Grey 20%
- AR-PM157 French Grey 30%
- AR-PM158 French Grey 40%
- AR-PM159 French Grey 50%
- AR-PM160 French Grey 60%
- AR-PM161 French Grey 70%
- AR-PM162 French Grey 80%
- AR-PM163 French Grey 90%
- AR-PM164 Peacock Green
- AR-PM165 Grass Green
- AR-PM166 True Green
- AR-PM167 Apple Green

You must purchase a minimum of 12 single marker each time you order.

PRISMACOLOR MARKERS AND SETS

• Prismacolor Singles
Unique four in one design creates four line widths from one double-ended marker. Extra broad nibs imitates paint brush stroke while fine and thin nibs achieve gentle refined strokes.

- AR-PM168 Dark Purple
- AR-PM169 Tuscan Red
- AR-PM170 Peach
- AR-PM171 Lilac
- AR-PM172 Light Umber
- AR-PM173 Light Violet
- AR-PM184 Forest Green
- AR-PM185 Spruce
- AR-PM186 Emerald
- AR-PM187 Leaf Green
- AR-PM190 Tangerine
- *All Single Markers $3.30*

• **Prismacolor Art Pencil Sets**
Professional Art Pencil Sets Soft lead, permanent pigments, blendable. Water and smear resistant. *No eraser.*

• 12 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03596	$13.95
• 24 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03597	$26.95
• 48 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03598	$51.95
• 72 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03599	$76.95
• 96 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03601	$101.95
• 120 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03602	$127.95

• **DISPLAY PORTFOLIOS**
ARTFOLIOS
24 pages of acid pvc, and lignen safe art sleeves. Archival Safe
- *AR-IA1212 Artfolio Book 11 x 17 w/ 24 sheets* $15.95
(Holds Blue Line Comic Book Art Boards)
- *AR-IA 1214 Artfolio book 14 x 17 w/ 24 sheets* $25.95
(Holds most oversized art boards)
- *AR-IA 128 Artfolio book 8 1/2 x 11 w/ 24 sheets* $7 50

COPIC Markers have been widely used in Europe and Asia where their coloring qualities go hand in hand with the style we know as manga. Their versatility and variety lends itself to the imagination of the creator and gives him or her options for their creative style. The standard square designed COPIC marker is double-ended and fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

• Single Copic Markers
$4 95 each

100B45	Smokey Blue	100R37	Carmine
100BG02	New Blue	100R39	Garnet
100BG05	Holiday Blue	100R59	Cardinal
100BG09	Blue Green	100RV02	Sugared Almnd Pink
100BG10	Cool Shadow	100RV04	Shock Pink
100BG11	Moon White	100RV06	Cerise
100BG13	Mint Green	100RV09	Fuchsia
100BG15	Aqua	100RV10	Pale Pink
100BG18	Tea Blue	100RV11	Pink
100BG32	Aqua Mint	100RV13	Tender Pink
100BG34	Horizon Green	100RV14	Begonia Pink
100BG45	Nile Blue	100RV17	Deep Magenta
100BG49	Duck Blue	100RV19	Red Violet
100BG99	Fragstone Blue	100RV21	Light Pink
100BV00	Mauve Shadow	100RV25	Dog Rose Flower
100BV04	Blue Berry	100RV29	Crimson
100BV08	Blue Violet	100RV32	Shadow Pink
100BV23	Grayish Lavender	100RV34	Dark Pink
100BV31	Pale Lavender	100T0	Toner Gray 0
100C0	Cool Gray 0	100T1	Toner Gray 1
100C1	Cool Gray 1	100T10	Toner Gray 10
100C10	Cool Gray 10	100T2	Toner Gray 2
100C2	Cool Gray 2	100T3	Toner Gray 3
100C3	Cool Gray 3	100T4	Toner Gray 4
100C4	Cool Gray 4	100T5	Toner Gray 5
100C5	Cool Gray 5	100T6	Toner Gray 6
100C6	Cool Gray 6	100T7	Toner Gray 7
100C7	Cool Gray 7	100T8	Toner Gray 8
100C8	Cool Gray 8	100T9	Toner Gray 9
100C9	Cool Gray 9	100V04	Lilac
100E00	Skin White	100V06	Lavender
100E02	Fruit Pink	100V09	Violet
100E04	Lipstick Natural	100V12	Pale Lilac
100E07	Light Mahogany	100V15	Mallow
100E09	Burnt Sienna	100V17	Amethyst
100E11	Barsley Beige	100W0	Warm Gray 0
100E13	Light Suntan	100W10	Warm Gray 10
100E15	Dark Suntan	100W2	Warm Gray 2
100E19	Redwood	100W3	Warm Gray 3
100E21	Baby Skin Pink	100W4	Warm Gray 4
100F25	Caribe Cocoa	100W5	Warm Gray 5
100E27	Africano	100W6	Warm Gray 6
100E29	Burnt Umber	100W7	Warm Gray 7
100E31	Brick Beige	100W8	Warm Gray 8
100E33	Sand	100W9	Warm Gray 9
100E34	Orientale	100Y00	Barium Yellow
100E35	Chamois	100Y02	Canary Yellow
100E37	Sepia	100Y06	Yellow
100E39	Leather	100Y08	Acid Yellow
100E40	Brick White	100Y11	Pale Yellow
100E41	Pearl White	100Y13	Lemon Yellow
100E43	Dull Ivory	100Y15	Cadmium Yellow
100E44	Clay	100Y17	Golden Yellow
100E49	Dark Bark	100Y19	Napoli Yellow
100E51	Milky White	100Y21	Buttercup Yellow
100E53	Raw Silk	100Y23	Yellowish Beige
100E55	Light Camel	100Y26	Mustard
100E57	Light Walnut	100Y38	Honey
100E59	Walnut	100YG01	Green Bice
100E77	Maroon	100YG03	Yellow Green
100G00	Jade Green	100YG05	Salad
100G02	Spectrum Green	100YG07	Acid Green
100G05	Emerald Green	100YG09	Lettuce Green
100G07	Nile Green	100YG11	Mignonette
100G09	Veronese Green	100YG13	Chartreuse
100G12	Sea Green	100YG17	Grass Green
100G14	Apple Green	100YG21	Anise
100G16	Malachite	100YG23	New Leaf
100G17	Forest Green	100YG25	Celadon Green
100G19	Bright Parrot Green	100YG41	Pale Green
100G20	Wax White	100YG45	Cobalt Green
100G21	Lime Green	100YG63	Pea Green
100G24	Willow	100YG67	Moss
100G28	Ocean Green	100YG95	Pale Olive
100G29	Pine Tree Green	100YG97	Spanish Olive
100G40	Dim Green	100YG99	Marine Green
100G82	Spring Dim Green	100YR00	Powder Pink
100G85	Verdigris	100YR02	Light Orange
100G99	Olive	100YR04	Chrome Orange
100N0	Neutral Gray 0	100YR07	Cadmium Orange
100N1	Neutral Gray 1	100YR09	Chinese Orange
100N10	Neutral Gray 10	100YR14	Caramel
100N2	Neutral Gray 2	100YR16	Apricot
100N3	Neutral Gray 3	100YR18	Sanguine
100N4	Neutral Gray 4	100YR21	Creme
100N5	Neutral Gray 5	100YR23	Yellow Ochre
100N6	Neutral Gray 6	100YR24	Pale Sepia
100N7	Neutral Gray 7		

• COPIC MARKER SETS

100N8	Neutral Gray 8	
100N9	Neutral Gray 9	
100R00	Pinkish White	
100R02	Flesh	
100R05	Salmon Red	
100R08	Vermilion	
100R11	Pale Cherry Pink	
100R17	Lipstick Orange	
100R20	Blush	
100R24	Prawn	
100R27	Cadmium Red	
100R29	Lipstick Red	
100R32	Peach	
100R35	Coral	

110 COPIC 12 Basic	$59 40
112 COPIC 12 PCS NG	$59 40
114 COPIC 12 PCS TG	$59 40
116 COPIC 12 PCS WG	$59 40
118 COPIC 12 PCS CG	$59 40
120 COPIC 36 Color Set	$178 20
140 Copic 72 Color Set A	$356 40
150 Copic 72 Color Set B	$356 40
155 Copic 72 Color Set C	$356 40
160 Copic Empty Marker	$3 50

• COPIC Various Ink (Refills) $4 95

200100	Black
200110	Special Black
200B00	Frost Blue
200B000	Pale Porcelain Blue

Middle columns (200 series):

|			
200B01	Mint Blue	200E00	Skin White
200B02	Robin's Egg Blue	200E000	Pale Fruit Pink
200B04	Tahitian Blue	200E01	Pink Flamingo
200B05	Process Blue	200E02	Fruit Pink
200B06	Peacock Blue	200E04	Lipstick Natural
200B12	Ice Blue	200E07	Light Mahogany
200B14	Light Blue	200E08	Brown
200B16	Cyanine Blue	200E09	Burnt Sienna
200B18	Lapis Lazuli	200E11	Barely Beige
200B21	Baby Blue	200E13	Light Suntan
200B23	Phthalo Blue	200E15	Dark Suntan
200B24	Sky	200E19	Redwood
200B26	Cobalt Blue	200E21	Baby Skin Pink
200B28	Royal Blue	200E25	Caribe Cocoa
200B29	Ultramarine	200E27	Africano
200B32	Pale Blue	200E29	Burnt Umber
200B34	Manganese Blue	200E31	Brick Beige
200B37	Antwerp Blue	200E33	Sand
200B39	Prussian Blue	200E34	Orientale
200B41	Powder Blue	200E35	Chamois
200B45	Smoky Blue	200E37	Sepia
200B52	Soft Greenish Blue	200E39	Leather
200B60	Pale Blue Grey	200E40	Brick White
200B63	Light Hydrangea	200E41	Pearl White
200B79	Iris	200E43	Dull Ivory
200B91	Pale Grayish Blue	200E44	Clay
200B93	Light Crockery Blue	200E47	Dark Brown
200B95	Light Grayish Cobalt	200E49	Dark Bark
200B97	Night Blue	200E50	Egg Shell
200B99	Agate	200E51	Milky White
200BG01	Aqua Blue	200E53	Raw Silk
200BG02	New Blue	200E55	Light Camel
200BG05	Holiday Blue	200E57	Light Walnut
200BG07	Petroleum Blue	200E59	Walnut
200BG09	Blue Green	200E71	Champagne
200BG10	Cool Shadow	200E74	Cocoa Brown
200BG11	Moon White	200E77	Maroon
200BG13	Mint Green	200E79	Cashew
200BG15	Aqua	200E93	Tea Rose
200BG18	Tea Blue	200E95	Flesh Pink
200BG23	Coral Sea	200E97	Deep Orange
200BG32	Aqua Mint	200E99	Baked Clay
200BG34	Horizon Green	200FB2	Flurescent Dull Blue
200BG45	Nile Blue	200FBG2	Fluorescent Dull Blue
200BG49	Duck Blue		Green
200BG93	Green Gray	200FRV1	Fluorescent Pink
200BG96	Bush	200FV2	Fluorescent Dull Violet
200BG99	Fragstone Blue	200FY1	Fluorescent Yellow Orange
200BV00	Mauve Shadow	200FYG1	Fluorescent Yellow
200BV000	Iridescent Mauve	200FYG2	Fluorescent
200BV02	Prune		Dull Yellow Green
200BV04	Blue Berry	200FYR1	Fluorescent Orange
200BV08	Blue Violet	200G00	Jade Green
200BV11	Soft Violet	200G02	Spectrum Green
200BV13	Hydrangea Blue	200G05	Emerald Green
200BV17	Deep Reddish Blue	200G07	Nile Green
200BV20	Dull Lavender	200G09	Veronese Green
200BV23	Grayish Lavender	200G12	Sea Green
200BV25	Grayish Violet	200G14	Apple Green
200BV29	Slate	200G16	Malachite
200BV31	Pale Lavender	200G17	Forest Green
200C0	Cool Gray	200G19	Bright Parrot Green
200C1	Cool Gray 1	200G20	Wax White
200C10	Cool Gray 10	200G21	Lime Green
200C2	Cool Gray 2	200G24	Willow
200C3	Cool Gray 3	200G28	Ocean Green
200C4	Cool Gray 4	200G29	Pine Tree Green
200C5	Cool Gray 5	200G40	Dim Green
200C6	Cool Gray 6	200G82	Spring Dim Green
200C7	Cool Gray 7	200G85	Verdigris
200C8	Cool Gray 8	200G94	Grayish Olive
200C9	Cool Gray 9	200G99	Olive

200 SERIES. One of the best parts about COPIC markers standard and sketch is their refillable ink feature. No more tossing out dried out markers. Just fill it back up again and you're ready to go. Refills can be used up six times. This refillable feature gives you the opportunity to make your own color though mixing inks, creating an original color all your own.

Right columns:

200N0	Neutral Gray
200N1	Neutral Gray 1
200N10	Neutral Gray 10
200N2	Neutral Gray 2
200N3	Neutral Gray 3
200N4	Neutral Gray 4
200N5	Neutral Gray 5
200N6	Neutral Gray 6
200N7	Neutral Gray 7
200N8	Neutral Gray 8
200N9	Neutral Gray 9
200R00	Pinkish White
200R000	Cherry White
200R02	Flesh
200R05	Salmon Red
200R08	Vermilion
200R11	Pale Cherry White
200R12	Light Rose Tea
200R14	Light Rouse
200R17	Lipstick Orange
200R20	Blush
200R22	Light Prawn
200R24	Prawn
200R27	Cadmium Red
200R29	Lipstick Red
200R30	Pale Yellowish Pink
200R32	Peach
200R35	Coral
200R37	Carmine
200R39	Garnet
200R43	Bougainvillaea
200R46	Strong Red
200R59	Cardinal
200RV02	Sugared Almond Pink
200RV04	Shock Pink
200RV06	Cerise
200RV09	Fuchsia
200RV10	Pale Pink
200RV11	Pink
200RV13	Tender Pink
200RV14	Begonia Pink
200RV17	Deep Magenta
200RV19	Red Violet
200RV21	Light Pink
200RV23	Pure Pink
200RV25	Dog Rose Flower
200RV29	Crimson
200RV32	Shadow Pink
200RV34	Dark Pink
200RV42	Salmon Pink
200T0	Toner Gray
200T1	Toner Gray 1
200T10	Toner Gray 10
200T2	Toner Gray 2
200T3	Toner Gray 3
200T4	Toner Gray 4
200T5	Toner Gray 5
200T6	Toner Gray 6
200T7	Toner Gray 7
200T8	Toner Gray 8
200T9	Toner Gray 9
200V01	Health
200V04	Lilac
200V05	Marigold
200V06	Lavender
200V09	Violet
200V12	Pale Lilac
200V15	Mallow
200V17	Amethyst
200V91	Pale Grape
200V95	Light Grape
200V99	Aubergine
200W0	Warm Gray
200W1	Warm Gray 1
200W10	Warm Gray 10
200W2	Warm Gray 2
200W3	Warm Gray 3
200W4	Warm Gray 4
200W5	Warm Gray 5
200W6	Warm Gray 6
200W7	Warm Gray 7
200W8	Warm Gray 8
200W9	Warm Gray 9
200Y00	Barium Yellow
200Y02	Canary Yellow
200Y04	Acacia
200Y06	Yellow
200Y08	Acid Yellow
200Y11	Pale Yellow
200Y13	Lemon Yellow
200Y15	Cadmium Yellow
200Y17	Golden Yellow
200Y19	Napoli Yellow
200Y21	Buttercup Yellow
200Y23	Yellowish Beige
200Y26	Mustard
200Y28	Lionet Gold
200Y32	Cashmere
200Y35	Maize
200Y38	Honey
200YG00	Mimosa Yellow
200YG01	Green Bice
200YG03	Yellow Green
200YG05	Salad
200YG06	Yellowish Green
200YG07	Acid Green
200YG09	Lettuce Green
200YG11	Mignonette
200YG13	Chartreuse
200YG17	Grass Green
200YG21	Anise

200YG23	New Leaf
200YG25	Celadon Green
200YG41	Pale Green
200YG45	Cobalt Green
200YG63	Pea Green
200YG67	Moss
200YG91	Putty
200YG93	Grayish Yellow
200YG95	Pale Olive
200YG97	Spanish Olive
200YG99	Marine Green
200YR00	Powder Pink
200YR000	Silk
200YR02	Light Orange
200YR04	Chrome Orange
200YR07	Cadmium Orange
200YR09	Chinese Orange
200YR14	Caramel
200YR16	Apricot
200YR18	Sanguine
200YR20	Yellowish Shade
200YR21	Cream
200YR23	Yellow Ochre
200YR24	Pale Sepia
200YR31	Light Reddish Yellow
200YR61	Yellowish Skin Pink
200YR65	Atoll
200YR68	Orange

Colorless Blender
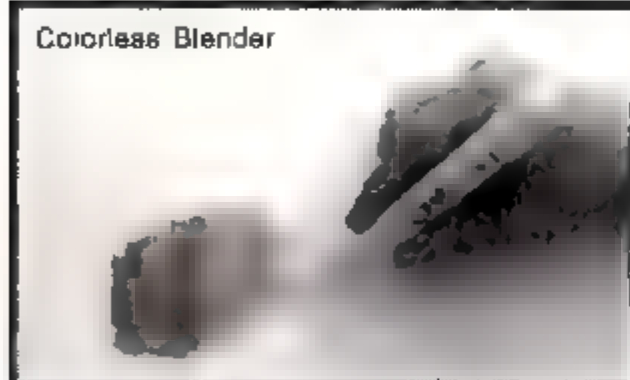
210	Various Ink Colorless Blender	$3.75
220	Various Colorless Blender 200c	$9.75
230	Various Ink Empty Bottle	$2.65

Nibs

• Replaceable Marker Nibs $4.20
Another great feature about COPIC makers is there interchangeable nibs From broad to calligraphy - provide greater freedom of technique in your renderings COPIC Nibs deliver clear vibrant color on photocopied surfaces as well as glass plastics and metals. The nibs are made of strong but flexible polyester for smooth consistent application Nibs come in a pack of 10 except for the brush variety that comes in a pack of 3

300	Standard Broad
310	Soft Broad
320	Round
330	Calligraphy 5mm
340	Brush
350	Standard Fine
360	Super Fine
370	Semi Broad
380	Calligraphy 3mm
385	Sketch Nib Super Brush
390	Sketch Nib Medium Broad

400 Copic Tweezer $4.20
Our special COPIC Tweezers give you an easy no mess nib change that gets you drawing again in minutes. Being able to change nibs quickly helps you keep up with the most demanding marker techniques

• COPIC SKETCH MARKERS
The oval designed Sketch COPIC marker is double ended and is fast drying COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work direct onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color COPIC Sketch markers' oval body profile gives you a feel of a fast flowing experience in your hands It paints as well as it draws They come with a broad nib and a brush like nib, available in medium + broad and super brush making them great for delicate or bold expression (from fashion and graphics to textiles and fine arts lettering/calligraphy) COPIC sketch markers are available in 286 colors One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

450	Colorless Blender	$4.20
45100	Black	$4.20
45110	Special Black	$4.20
452	Sketch 12 Basic Set	$59.40
454	Sketch 36 Basic Set	$178.20
456	Sketch 72 set A	$356.40
458	Sketch 72 Set B	$356.40

• Single COPIC SKETCH Markers $4.95

45B00	Frost Blue
45B000	Pale Porcelain Blue
45B01	Mint Blue
45B02	Robins Egg Blue
45B04	Tahitian Blue
45B05	Process Blue
45B06	Peacock Blue
45B12	Ice Blue
45B14	Light Blue
45B16	Cyanine $4.95
45B18	Lapis Lazuli
45B21	Baby Blue
45B23	Phthalo Blue
45B24	Sky
45B26	Cobalt Blue
45B28	Royal Blue
45B29	Ultra Marine
45B32	Pale Blue
45B34	Manganese Blue
45B37	Antwerp Blue
45B39	Prussian Blue
45B41	Powder Blue
45B45	Smokey Blue
45B52	Soft Greenish Blue
45B60	Pale Blue Gray
45B63	Light Hydrangea
45B79	Iris
45B91	Pale Grayish Blue
45B93	Light Crockery Blue
45B95	Light Grayish Cobalt
45B97	Night Blue
45B99	Agate
45BG01	Aqua Blue
45BG02	New Blue
45BG05	Holiday Blue
45BG07	Petroleum Blue
45BG09	Blue Green
45BG10	Cool Shadow
45BG11	Moon White
45BG13	Mint Green
45BG15	Aqua
45BG18	Tea Blue
45BG23	Cora Sea
45BG32	Aqua Mint
45BG34	Horizon Green
45BG45	Nile Blue
45BG49	Duck Blue
45BG93	Green
45BG96	Bush
45BG99	Fragstone Blue
45BV00	Mauve Shadow
45BV000	Iridescent Mauve
45BV02	Prune
45BV04	Blue Berry
45BV08	Blue Violet
45BV11	Soft Violet
45BV13	Hydrangea Blue
45BV17	Deep Reddish Blue
45BV20	Dull Lavender
45BV23	Grayish Lavender
45BV25	Grayish Violet
45BV29	Slate
45BV31	Pale Lavender
45C0	Cool Gray 0
45C1	Cool Gray 1
45C10	Cool Gray 10
45C2	Cool Gray 2
45C3	Cool Gray 3
45C4	Cool Gray 4
45C5	Cool Gray 5
45C6	Cool Gray 6
45C7	Cool Gray 7
45C8	Cool Gray 8
45C9	Cool Gray 9
45E00	Skin White
45E000	Pale Fruit Pink
45E01	Pink Flamingo
45E02	Fruit Pink
45E04	Lipstick Natural
45E07	Light Mahogany
45E08	Brown
45E09	Burnt Sienna
45E11	Barley Beige
45E13	Light Suntan
45E15	Dark Suntan
45E19	Redwood
45E21	Baby Skin Pink
45E25	Caribe Cocoa
45E27	Africano
45E29	Burnt Umber
45E31	Brick Beige
45E33	Sand
45E34	Orientale
45E35	Chamois
45E37	Sepia
45E39	Leather
45E40	Brick White
45E41	Pearl White
45E43	Dull Ivory
45E44	Clay
45E47	Dark Brown
45E49	Dark Bark
45E50	Eggshell
45E51	Milky White
45E53	Raw Silk
45E55	Light Camel
45E57	Light Walnut
45E59	Walnut
45E71	Champagne
45E74	Cocoa Brown
45E77	Maroon
45E79	Cashew
45E93	Tea Rose
45E95	Flesh Pink
45E97	Deep Orange
45E99	Baked Clay
45FB2	Flourescent Dull Blue
45FBG2	Flourescent Dull Blue Green
45FRV1	Flourescent Pink
45FV2	Flourescent Dull Violet
45FY1	Flourescent Yellow Orange
45FYG1	Flourescent Yellow Green
45FYG2	Flourescent Dull Yellow Green
45FYR1	Flourescent Orange
45G00	Jade Green
45G02	Spectrum Green
45G05	Emerald Green
45G07	Nile Green
45G09	Veronese Green
45G12	Sea Green
45G14	Apple Green
45G16	Malachite
45G17	Forest Green
45G19	Bright Parrot Green
45G20	Wax White
45G21	Lime Green
45G24	Willow
45G28	Ocean Green
45G29	Pine Tree Green
45G40	Dim Green
45G82	Spring Dim Green
45G85	Verdigris
45G94	Grayish Olive
45G99	Olive
45N0	Neutral Gray 0
45N1	Neutral Gray 1
45N10	Neutral Gray 10
45N2	Neutral Gray 2
45N3	Neutral Gray 3
45N4	Neutral Gray 4
45N5	Neutral Gray 5
45N6	Neutral Gray 6
45N7	Neutral Gray 7
45N8	Neutral Gray 8
45N9	Neutral Gray 9
45R00	Pinkish White
45R000	Cherry White
45R02	Flesh
45R05	Salmon Red
45R08	Vermilion
45R11	Pale Cherry Pink
45R12	Light Tea Rose
45R14	Light Rouse
45R17	Lipstick Orange
45R20	Blush
45R22	Light Prawn
45R24	Prawn
45R27	Cadmium Red
45R29	Lipstick Red
45R30	Pale Yellowish Pink
45R32	Peach
45R35	Coral
45R37	Carmine
45R39	Garnet
45R43	Bougainvillea
45R46	Strong Red
45R59	Cardinal
45RV02	Sugared Almond Pink
45RV04	Shock Pink
45RV06	Cerise
45RV09	Fuchsia
45RV10	Pale Pink
45RV11	Pink
45RV13	Tender Pink
45RV14	Begonia Pink
45RV17	Deep Magenta
45RV19	Red Violet
45RV21	Light Pink
45RV23	Pure Pink
45RV25	Dog Rose Flower
45RV29	Crimson
45RV32	Shadow Pink
45RV34	Dark Pink
45RV42	Salmon Pink
45T0	Toner Gray 0
45T1	Toner Gray 1
45T10	Toner Gray 10
45T2	Toner Gray 2
45T3	Toner Gray 3
45T4	Toner Gray 4
45T5	Toner Gray 5
45T6	Toner Gray 6
45T7	Toner Gray 7
45T8	Toner Gray 8
45T9	Toner Gray 9
45V01	Heath
45V04	Lilac
45V05	Mangod
45V06	Lavender
45V09	Violet
45V12	Pale Lilac
45V15	Mallow
45V17	Amethyst
45V91	Pale Grape
45V95	Light Grape
45V99	Aubergine
45W0	Warm Gray 0
45W1	Warm Gray 1
45W10	Warm Gray 10
45W2	Warm Gray 2
45W3	Warm Gray 3
45W4	Warm Gray 4
45W5	Warm Gray 5
45W6	Warm Gray 6
45W7	Warm Gray 7
45W8	Warm Gray 8
45W9	Warm Gray 9
45Y00	Barium Yellow
45Y02	Canary Yellow
45Y04	Acacia
45Y06	Yellow
45Y08	Acid Yellow
45Y11	Pale Yellow
45Y13	Lemon Yellow
45Y15	Cadmium Yellow
45Y17	Golden Yellow
45Y19	Napoli Yellow
45Y21	Buttercup Yellow
45Y23	Yellowish Beige
45Y26	Mustard
45Y28	Lionet Gold
45Y32	Cashmere
45Y35	Maize
45Y38	Honey
45YG00	Mimosa Yellow
45YG01	Green Bice
45YG03	Yellow Green
45YG05	Salad
45YG06	Yellowish Green
45YG07	Acid Green
45YG09	Lettuce Green
45YG11	Mignonette
45YG13	Chartreuse
45YG17	Grass Green
45YG21	Anise
45YG23	New Leaf
45YG25	Celadon Green
45YG41	Pale Green
45YG45	Cobalt Green
45YG63	Pea Green
45YG67	Moss
45YG91	Putty
45YG93	Grayish Yellow
45YG95	Pale Olive
45YG97	Spanish Olive
45YG99	Marine Green
45YR00	Powder Pink
45YR000	Silk
45YR02	Light Orange
45YR04	Chrome Orange
45YR07	Cadmium Orange
45YR09	Chinese Orange
45YR14	Caramel
45YR16	Apricot
45YR18	Sanguine
45YR20	Yellowish Shade
45YR21	Crema
45YR23	Yellow Ochre
45YR24	Pale Sepia
45YR31	Light Reddish Yellow
45YR61	Yellowish Skin Pink
45YR65	Atoll
45YR68	Orange
460	Sketch 72 Set C $356.40
462	Sketch 72 Set D $356.40

• 500 Copic Opaque White $9.75
COPIC Opaque White is a water based white pigment used for highlight effects It won't bleed into the base color so it gives sharp line definition and can be used on watercolor as well as other permanent ink surfaces

510	Copic Alcohol Marker Pad A4	$9.95
520	Copic Alcohol Marker Pad B4	$19.95
530	TOO Manga Manuscript Paper A4	$6.95
540	TOO Manga Manuscript Paper B4	$9.95
550	72 pc wire stand	$59.95
560	36 pc block stand	$29.95
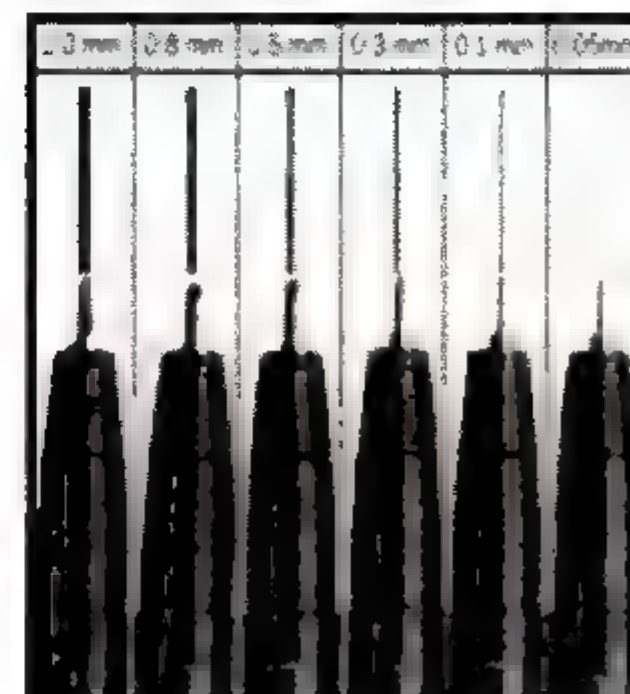
• COPIC's MULTI LINERS drawing pens allow drawing without annoying running ink They are available in pens and brush The pens come in a wide range of line widths (from 05 to 1.0 mm) while the brushes come in three different sizes small medium and large

600	Multiliner 05	$2.50
610	Multiliner 01	$2.50
620	Multiliner 03	$2.50

630	Multiliner 0 5	$2 50
640	Multiliner 0 8	$2 50
650	Multiliner 1 0	$2 50
660	Multiliner Brush M	$2 95
670	Multiliner Brush S	$2 95
671	Sepia,ML 05	$2 50
672	Sepia,ML 1	$2 50
673	Sepia,ML 3	$2 50
674	Grey,ML 05	$2 50
675	Grey,ML 1	$2 50
676	Grey,ML .3	$2 50
680	Multiliner Set A	$15 00
690	Multiliner Set B	$20 00

COPIC Air Marker

• 705 ABS-1 Kit $60.95
ABS-1 Kit COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space It's simple to use - just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability This is the airbrush ABS-1 Kit It comes with 1 Air Grip (where the pen goes in) 2 The air adapter (where the empty canister that the air grip screws on to This canister is just a reservoir, it does not contain air) 3 The airhose (this connects from the bottom of the air adapter to the top of the aircan) 4 The aircan 80 5 The air can holder (a foam square with 3 holes in it so that you can stand the different sizes of aircans) This kit has all of the components in it for someone who would like to have portability but have to option to connect it to a compressor
• 710 Starting Set ABS-2 $26 50
Set ABS-2 COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color It's simple to use - just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and theother to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability This is the portable version of our airbrush system The ABS-2 Kit comes with a D-60 can of compressed air and the Airgrip This item is great for the artist on the move ONLY the D-60 aircan can be attached directly to the air grip because of some special tubing inside the can The other sizes of aircans 80 and 180 have to be attached to the hose and then to the air adapter They hold more air but are not so portable

720	Starting Set ABS-3	$28 50
730	Airgrip	$17 10
740	Air Adapter	$11 40
750	Airhose 1/4 to 1/8	$21 50
755	Airhose 1/8 to 1/8	$21 50
760	Air Can D-60	$8 95
763	Air Can 80	$10 95
765	Air Can 180	$12 95
770	Air Compressor	$186 50
910	NX Kit 2	$15 00
915	Too Professional Tone	$4 20
	(See the website for over 20 different types and styles of tones)	
95	Empty sketch marker	$3 60

Dr. Martin Watercolors
• Radiant Concentrated Watercolors Dr Martin s
Extremely concentrated watercolors. Giving great brilliance and radiant tones in illustrations. They may be diluted with water and blend freely Radiant colors are less transparent than synchromatic colors In .5 oz dropper top bottles.
SRP $3.95 each

ARDR4A	Alpine Rose
ARDR16B	Amber Yellow
ARDR42C	Antelope Brown
ARDR23B	Apple Green
ARDR14A	Black
ARDR31C	Burnt Orange
ARDR41C	Calypso Green
ARDR34C	Chartreuse
ARDR6A	Cherry Red
ARDR56D	Coffee Brown
ARDR18B	Crimson
ARDR20B	Cyclamen
ARDR15B	Daffodil Yellow
ARDR48D	Fuchsia
ARDR26B	Golden Brown
ARDR11A	Grass Green
ARDR32C	Hyacinth Blue
ARDR51D	Ice Blue
ARDR50D	Ice Green
ARDR37C	Ice Pink
ARDR40C	Ice Yellow
ARDR54D	Indian Yellow
ARDR53D	Irish Blue
ARDR35C	Jungle Green
ARDR12A	Juniper Green
ARDR1A	Lemon Yellow
ARDR27B	Mahogany
ARDR24B	Moss Green
ARDR7A	Moss Rose
ARDR33C	Norway Blue
ARDR25B	Olive Green
ARDR2A	Orange
ARDR52D	Peacock Blue
ARDR3A	Persimmon
ARDR30C	Pumpkin
ARDR49D	Raspberry
ARDR13A	Saddle Brown
ARDR5A	Scarlet
ARDR28B	Sepia
ARDR22B	Slate Blue
ARDR46D	Sunrise Pink
ARDR44D	Sunset Orange
ARDR45D	Sunset Red
ARDR43D	Sunshine Yellow
ARDR47D	Tahiti Red
ARDR17B	Tangerine
ARDR29C	Tapestry
ARDR55D	Tiger Yellow
ARDR36C	Tobacco Brown
ARDR38C	Tropic Gold
ARDR39C	Tropic Pink
ARDR9A	True Blue
ARDR8A	Turquoise Blue
ARDR21B	Ultra Blue
ARDR10A	Violet
ARDR19B	Wild Rose

-Radiant Concentrated Sets Dr Martin
Each set is comprised of 14 colors to cover the entire range of radiant colors
.5 oz bottles
• #ARDRA "A" set includes : Alpine Rose, Black, Cherry Red, Grass Green, Juniper Green, Lemon Yellow Moss Rose, Orange, Persimmon, Saddle Brown, Scarlet True Blue, Turquoise Blue, Violet.
SRP $55.20 per set
• #ARDRB "B" set includes: Amber Yellow, Apple Green, Crimson Cyclamen, Daffodil Yellow, Golden Brown, Mahogany, Moss Green, Olive Green, Sepia, Slate Blue, Tangerine, Ultra Blue, Wild Rose
SRP $55.20
• #ARDRC "C" set includes: Antelope Brown, Burnt Orange, Calypso Green, Chartreuse Hyacinth Blue, Ice Pink, Ice Yellow, Jungle Green, Norway Blue, Pumpkin Tapestry, Tobacco Brown, Tropic Gold, Tropic Pink
SRP $55.20
• #ARDRD "D" set includes: Coffee Brown Fuchsia, Ice Blue, Ice Green, Indian Yellow Irish Blue Peacock Blue, Raspberry, Sunrise Pink, Sunset Orange, Sunset Red, Sunshine Yellow, Tahiti Red, Tiger Yellow.
SRP $55.20

You must purchase a minimum of 12 single dyes each time you order

• Synchromatic Transparent Watercolors Dr. Martin
Synchromatic colors are easy to handle and give ultimate transparency They may be diluted with water .5 oz Dropper top bottles.
SRP $3.95

ARDR15	Beige
ARDR33	Black
ARDR38	Bluish Black
ARDR8	Burnt Sienna
ARDR2	Cadmium
ARDR32	Cadmium Orange
ARDR26	Carmine
ARDR28	Cerise
ARDR3	Chromium Yellow
ARDR39	Cobalt Blue
ARDR13	Dark Gray
ARDR21	Emerald
ARDR22	Hookers Green
ARDR24	Lake
ARDR1	Lemon Yellow
ARDR6	Light Brown
ARDR11	Light Gray
ARDR27	Magenta
ARDR12	Medium Gray
ARDR20	Nile Green
ARDR34	Olive Green
ARDR5	Orange
ARDR19	Payne s Grey
ARDR17	Prussian Blue
ARDR30	Purple
ARDR7	Red Brown
ARDR37	Rose Carmine
ARDR36	Scarlet
ARDR10	Sepia
ARDR31	Stone Gray
ARDR16	Turquoise Blue
ARDR18	Ultramarine
ARDR9	Van Dyke Brown
ARDR25	Vermilion
ARDR29	Violet
ARDR23	Viridian
ARDR4	Yellow Ochre

- Synchromatic Transparent Art Set
#ARDRCS Thirty-six .5 oz bottles Includes: Beige, Black, Burnt Sienna, Cadmium Cadmium Orange, Carmine, Cerise, Chromium Yellow, Cobalt Blue, Dark Gray, Emerald, Hooker's Green Lake, Lemon Yellow, Light Brown, Light Gray, Magenta, Medium Gray, Nile Green, Olive Green Orange Payne's Gray, Prussian Blue, Purple, Red Brown, Rose Carmine, Scarlet, Sepia, Turquoise Blue, Ultramarine, Van Dyke Brown, Vermilion, Violet, Viridian, Yellow Ochre.
SRP $113.50

- Synchromatic Transparent Art Small Set
• #ARDRSS Sixteen .5 oz. Bottles Includes: Black, Burnt Sienna, Cadmium, Cadmium Orange, Cobalt Blue, Emerald, Lemon Yellow, Magenta, Nile Green, Purple, Rose Carmine, Sepia, Turquoise Blue, Ultramarine, Vermilion, Yellow Ochre.

SRP $46.55
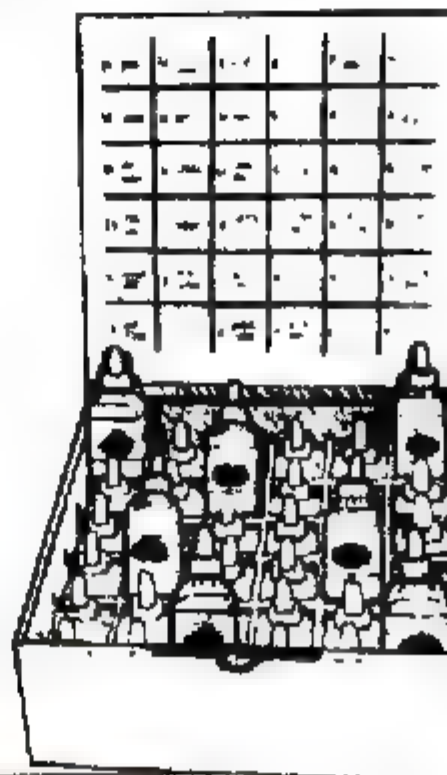
DISNEY'S ANIMATION MAGIC
A step-by-step introduction to animated filmmaking from the producer of some of Disney's most beloved and celebrated animated films. Don't let the cover fool you This book is packed with tips and information for everyone interested in drawing their own animaiton
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Introduction by Paul Din
Showcasing the talents of FrankCho, Marc Hempel and Mark Wheatly. This hardcover collections offers the reader an extended amount of artwork to view from Frank Cho's Liberty Meadows to the studios versions of Edgar Rice Burough's Tarzan. Many full color illustration.
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-ITEM#AB1016 *SRP*   *$29.95*
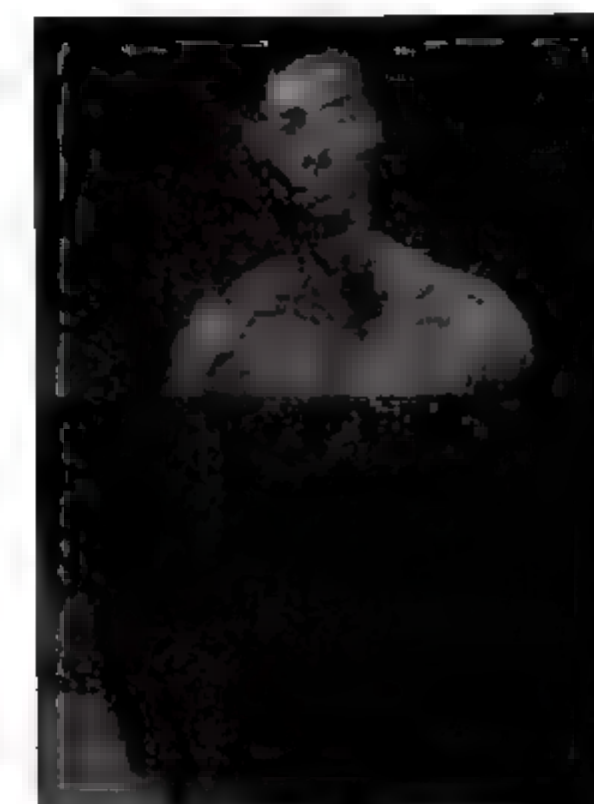
UNO FANTA
The art of Ashley (Spawn TMP) Wood.
-ITEM# AB1019
SRP   *$29.99*
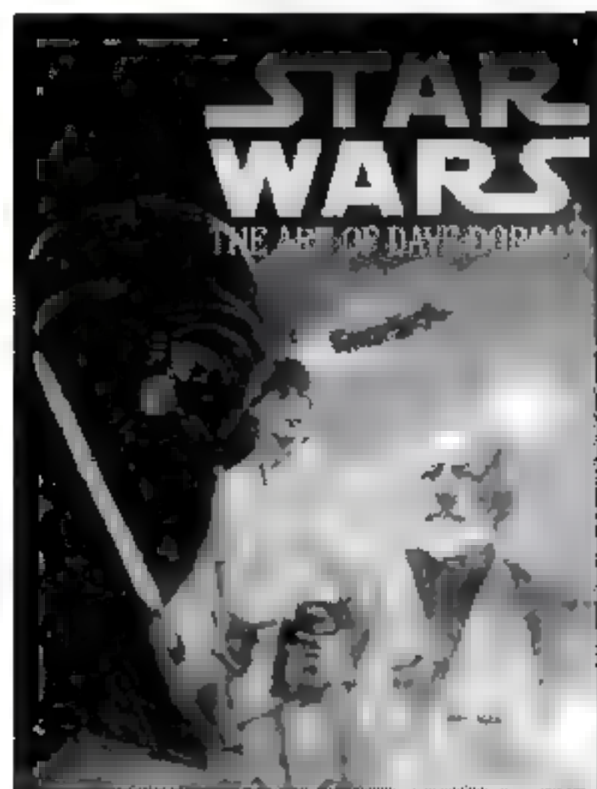
STAR WARS THE ART OF DAVE DORMAN

This book offers the most complete volume of Dave's Star Wars illustrations. Packed with paints, sketches and a very detailed how-to from "original design" to "completed painting" of this books cover
- Hardcover with wrap around cover
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-ITEM# AB1014-T1   SRP $17.95
Soft cover, 7x10, 128 pages of black and white illustrations
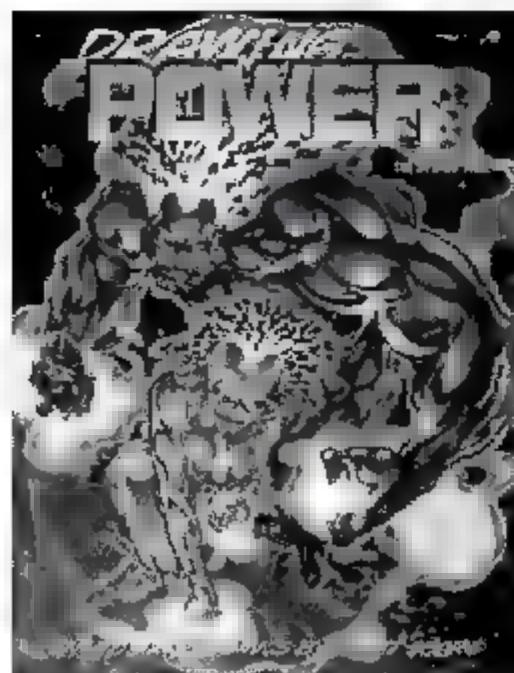
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How to draw comics by Bart Sears. (CrossGen)
-ITEM# AB1018   SRP $9.95
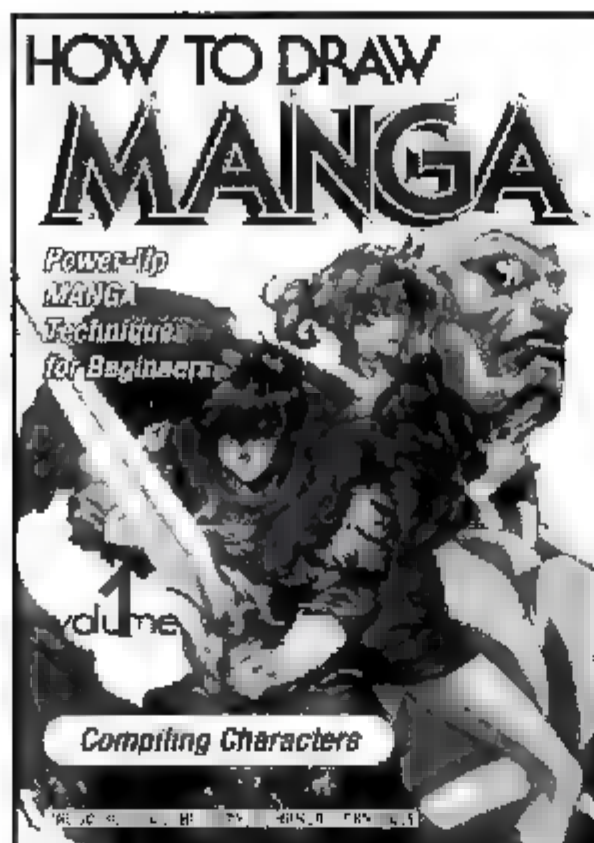
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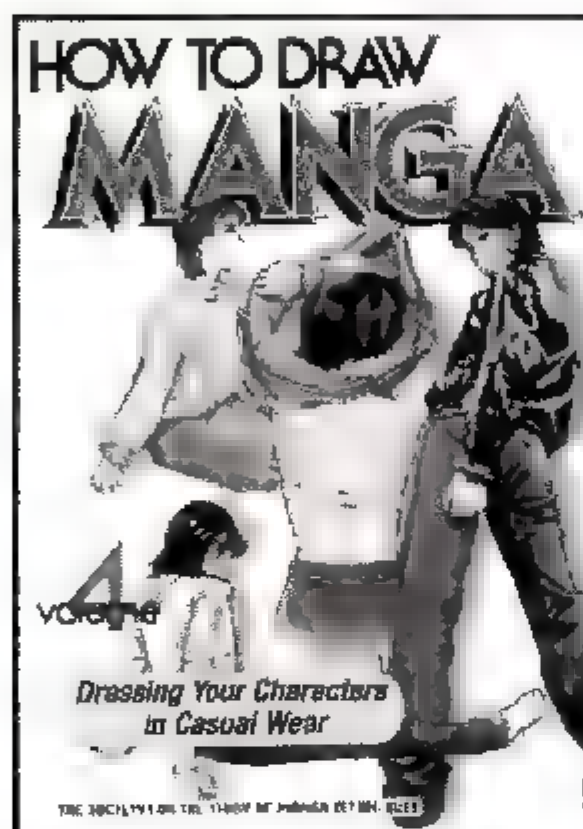
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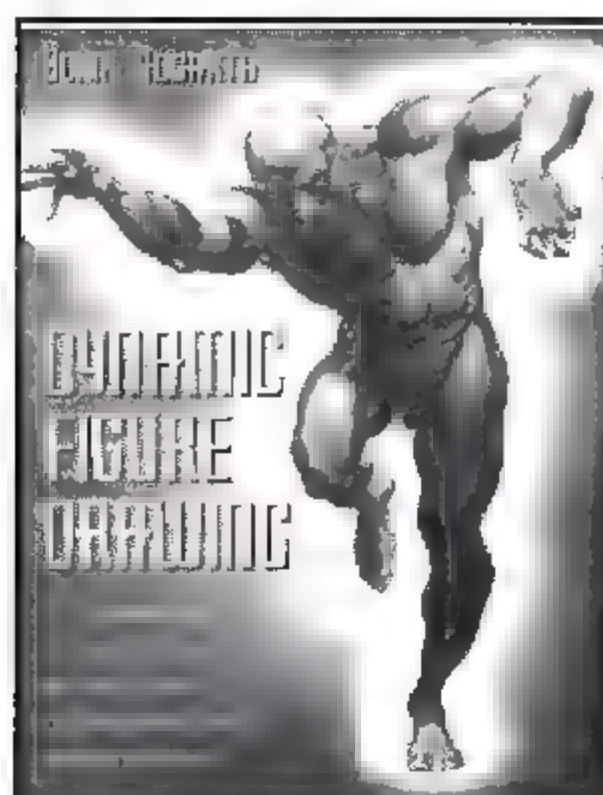
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By Burne Hogarth

Figure drawing is the most essential and the most difficult - of all skills for the artist to learn. The hardest problem is to visualize the figure in the tremendous variety of poses which the body takes in action, poses which plunge the various forms for the body into deep space and show them in radical foreshortening.

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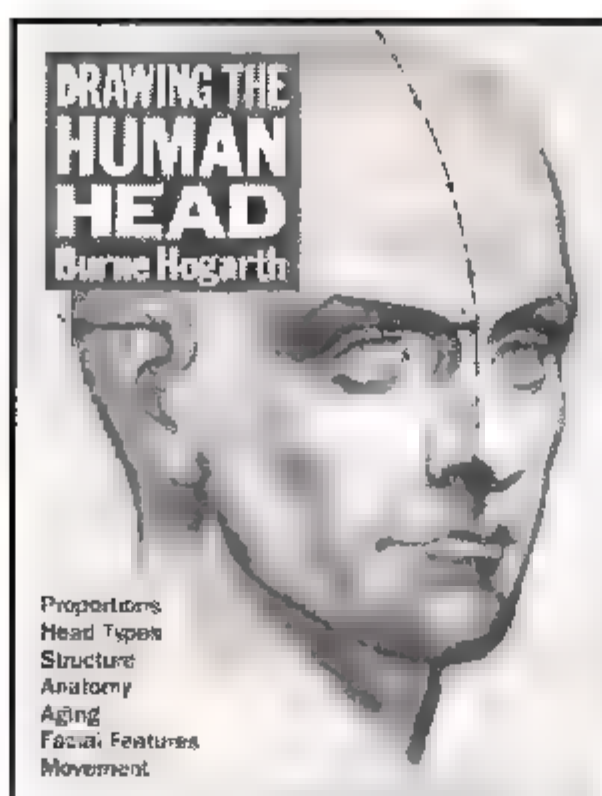
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By Burne Hogarth

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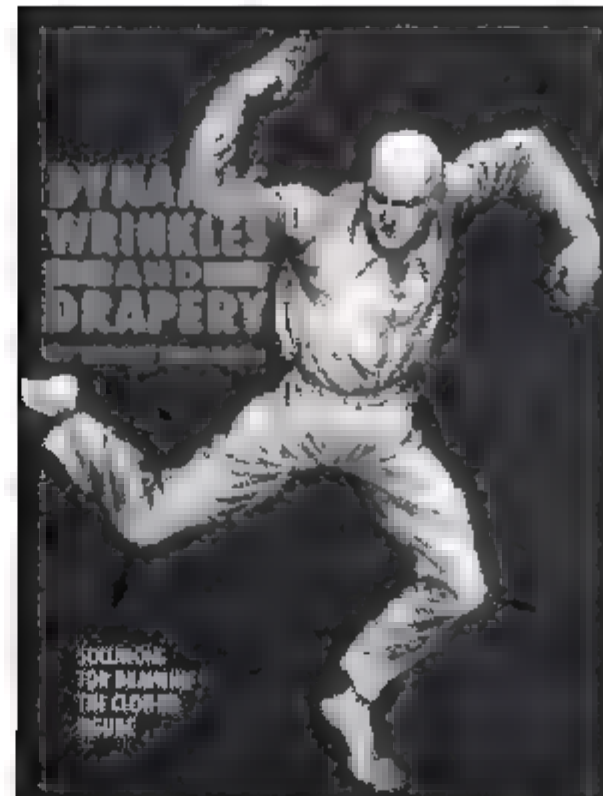
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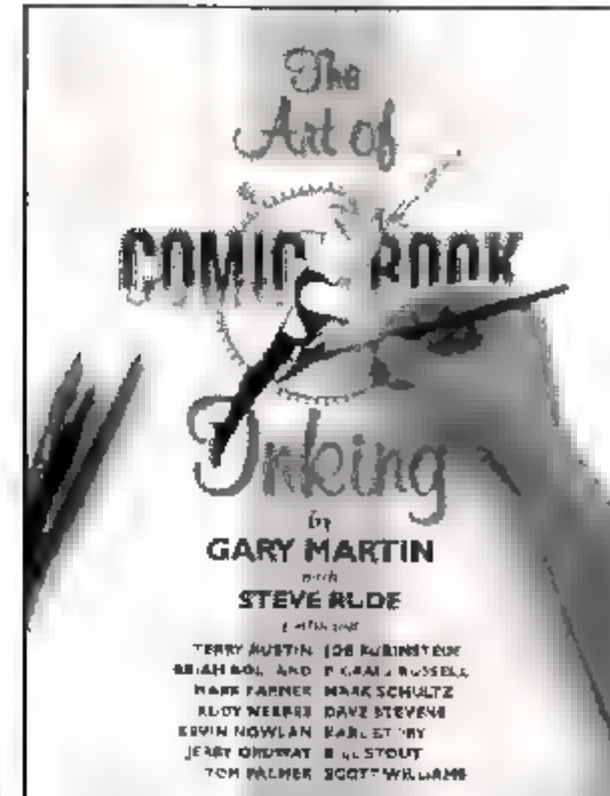
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by Gary Martin with Steve Rude

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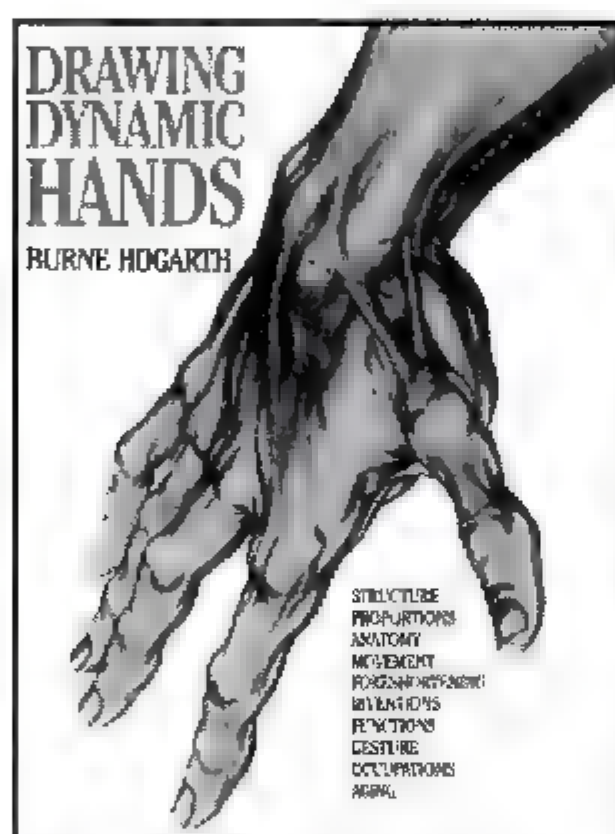
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By Burne Hogarth

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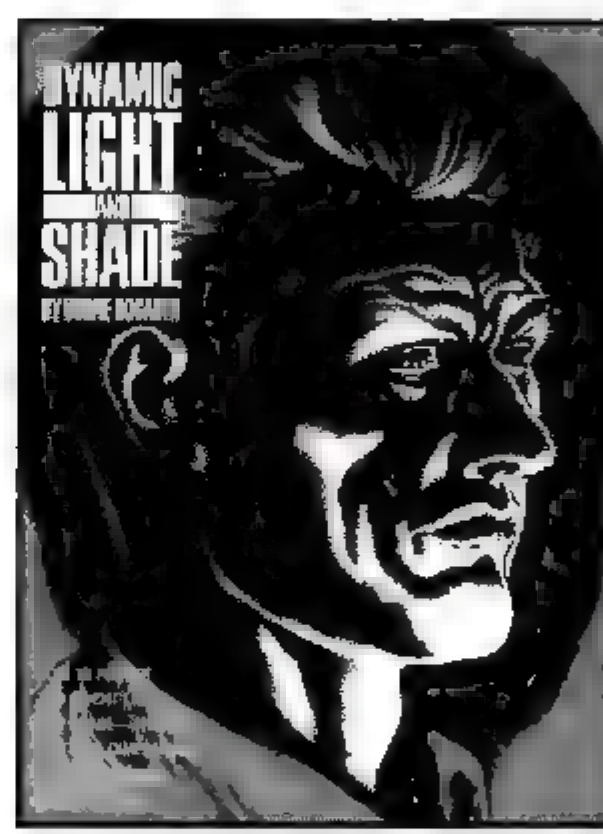
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By Burne Hogarth

Mastery of light and shade-rendered with accuracy and expressive power-is the key to three-dimensional form in drawing and painting. Hogarth begins with the simplest kind of light and shade, showing how a dark silhouette on white paper can communicate form and space.

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By Andy Smith

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By Stan Lee and John Buscema

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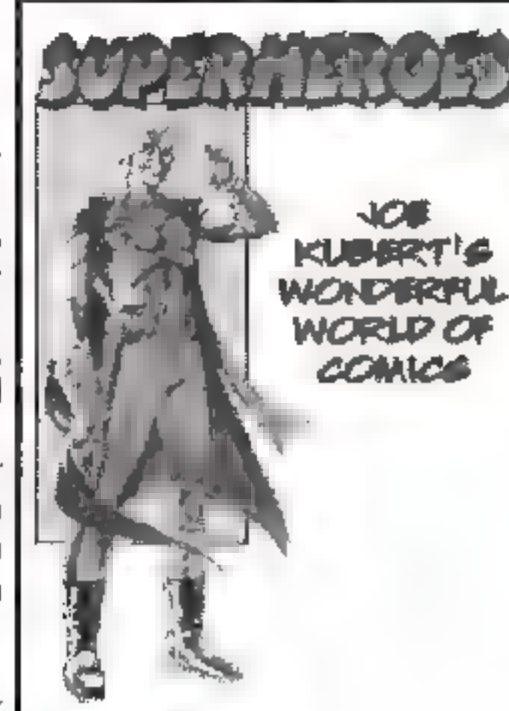
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Thoughts on Scripting Comic Books

by Tom Bierbaum

Okay, two issues ago we talked about where writers get their ideas, and last issue we discussed developing those ideas. So this time we'll complete the loop and talk about writing a plot or a full script based on all those great concepts you've been thinking up and developing.

I'm not going to devote a full column to just plots alone or scripts alone because I'm not sure I have a whole lot left to say on the subjects after we covered in such detail ways to develop your original ideas. The art of writing a full script has its share of do's and don'ts, but every plot is as unique as the writer-artist-editor relationship that exists for that particular comic, so there aren't a lot of real specific tips on how to do them right or wrong.

A little background first, for those who may not really know the difference between plots and full scripts. Forty years ago, virtually all comics were fully scripted, that is, a writer would figure out what was going to go into every panel and determine all the captions and dialogue and get the whole kit and caboodle down on paper in the form of a full script. That script would get sent along to the artist and only then would he start drawing the issue. This industry custom began to change at the dawn of the Marvel Comics universe, when Stan Lee was trying to run the entire company and write all its titles at the same time. He couldn't possibly generate full scripts for all the comics Marvel was launching and the artists were brimming over with their own ideas for great stories (as artists tend to be), so Stan decided to just sit down with each artist, kick around ideas for a few minutes, come up with a loose framework for the issue at hand and let the artist go off and draw it. Then when the pencilling was complete, Stan would write captions and dialogue to fit the resulting art.

It worked well — it was quicker for the writer, and allowed the artists to pour their creativity into Marvel's new concepts. Artists who previously were expected to slavishly follow the instructions of their writers and editors suddenly became an integral part of the genesis and execution of a new comic-book universe. It's no wonder the next few years of Marvel Comics comprised one of the most creative and exciting periods in the 60-plus-year history of the medium (maybe someday I'll also get into my theory as to how those revolutionary comics also sowed the seeds of the industry's current struggles, but that's somewhat off my current point). Gradually, the "Marvel style" of plotting spread through the industry, and for the past couple of decades most comics have been plotted, not fully scripted. But both approaches have their advantages and both may be useful to you as a writer. Especially if you have enough time to write a carefully thought-out full script, you're going to find yourself retaining greater control over the end product in that format. If you know exactly what you want, that's probably the way to go. But if your time is tight and, more importantly, if you really want to create some collaborative energy with your artist, a plot will probably work better for you.

We ended up preferring an amalgam of the two styles – we'd write something along the lines of a traditional plot, but with a preliminary version of the dialogue included. Then we'd write the final dialogue after seeing the pencilled pages, so the artist had the freedom to go in other directions if he or she came up with an inspired new angle, but we still had the ability to tailor the final wording of the story very specifically to the artwork. This also allowed us to get a second pass at the script, which represented a golden opportunity a few weeks or months after the initial pass to re work the passages that no longer sounded right to our ears. And there's nothing more eye-opening than to let your work sit for weeks or months and then pick it up cold and see how it reads to you when that golden prose is no longer fresh in your mind.

In any event, now that we've covered the general difference between a plot and a full script, here are a few tips on how to write them...

1) Outline your story, and concentrate on a good beginning and ending

I'm repeating points made in my column last issue, and look that one up for more detail, but when you write a plot or script make sure you're spreading the story out properly over the pages you've got to work with. And pay particular attention to the beginning of the comic and the end, because you've got to grab the reader in the beginning so he'll buy the book in the first place, and then make sure at the end that you've left him satisfied and hungry for next month's issue.

2) Strive for the optimum balance between brevity and detail

This one is a killer and we weren't very good at it, but a plot or script that tries to explain everything the artist could possibly need will go on forever and be extremely difficult for the artist to wade through. On the other hand, the artist is only going to know about what you put down on the page, so every detail you leave out is probably not going to show up in the story.

In general, if you're going to use the "Marvel" style you might as well learn to let go a little and give your artist a lot of leeway in executing your story, because endless pages of instructions aren't likely to ignite that artist's creative fires and you're never going to generate the collaborative energy the "Marvel" style invites.

But if you're doing a full script, you probably shouldn't leave as much open to interpretation. You certainly need to communicate at this point every piece of necessary visual information because your input as a writer is supposed to be done when you hand in that full script.

But the same general rule applies – you're going to overwhelm your artists if you give them tons of description for every little nuance of every panel. So make sure your instructions are lively, to-the-point and highly readable, so you're always re-fueling your artist's enthusiasm, not draining it.

In fact, the problem is usually less with your artist than your editor. I mean, think about it — if your artist is drawing a page or two a day, he can certainly take 15 or 20 minutes to sit down and read a detailed

Try to keep your captions and dialogue down to 35 words or less per panel on a standard page of five or six panels. This scene from Dead Kid #1 is about as wordy as you'll generally want to get in a regualr comic-book panel.

description of what it is he's going to be drawing that day. It's the editor who's got to wade through that entire plot or script in just a day or two, fix all the serious problems, and pass it along if he or she's going to keep the book on schedule. So for the editor's benefit you've got to keep the plots and scripts streamlined, accessible, and easy reading. That may seem off the point of making good comics, but if your editor doesn't like slogging through your plots and scripts he's not going to like working with you, and that's not very conducive to your professional survival in a struggling industry.

Along those lines...

3) Keep it well-organized and easy to follow

Mark the start of each new comic page and each new panel with large, bold letters. Make sure the artist and the editor can quickly find their place in your plots and scripts whenever they need to.

Also, head each page with your name, full address and phone number, plus the story name (and/or issue number) and the page number of the script itself. Artists and editors are almost always behind schedule and working on impossible deadlines, so, if a script or plot page gets misplaced, they can't waste time figuring out where a poorly marked page belongs. And if some unforeseen question arises and needs immediate attention, that phone number at the top of each page is going to be invaluable to your colleagues.

Some writers like to boldface the names of characters when they're first mentioned in a plot, which is especially useful if that's where you include special visual instructions regarding the character. This way, an artist can easily find that passage in the plot whenever he needs to refresh his memory about a character.

4) Don't be afraid to give your artist a lot of support

Especially in a plot but also in a script, tell your artists in so many words that you want to see a lot of their creativity channeled into the project (or if you don't, tactfully

and respectfully explain that you need them to strictly follow your instructions so the story can come out as you envision it).

Encourage them, compliment them, get them excited about the assignment. They'll do better work and you'll have a better final product if you have your artist putting some passion and pride of authorship into the story.

5) Don't be afraid to assert yourself when it's important

By the same token, make it very clear whenever something is important and must be done in a certain way. For example, if your story is going to be wordy, emphasize in no uncertain terms the need for the artist to leave large open spaces for the dialogue.

If you really want a certain character to look a certain way, or for a scene to be done seriously or humorously, or for there to be a certain degree of explicitness, or whatever, if it's important to you, make sure the artist knows that. He or she can always call you up and try to talk you out of it if they disagree, but they're not going to know it's important to you unless you tell them.

On the other hand, pick these moments carefully. Don't stubbornly insist on getting your way on a lot of trivial matters. Writers are a lot easier to replace than artists, so if the artist ends up not wanting to work with you again, that's a much bigger problem for you than it is for the artist.

6) Don't over-do it

If you want to write a novel, go into the novel-writing business. Comics get too crowded in a hurry, so limit yourself. Generally, you want to try to keep it down to six panels a page or less, probably averaging four or five panels per page. And shoot for 35 words or less in each of those panels. You can always go over these maximums, but do so rarely and judiciously.

The exception is if you've made a careful decision to work in a special format. When we collaborated with Keith Giffen, for example, he usually worked in the nine-panel grid format, and we liked it a lot. Most readers and other artists don't share our enthusiasm for it, but used properly, it was a clean, interesting way to tell a lot of story in a small space. However, if you're going to do smaller panels, allow yourself fewer words per panel, say, about 20-25 maximum in the nine-panel grid.

7) End your pages with a hook

Remember that the only time a comic book writer can spring a visual surprise is when the reader gets to the bottom of an odd-numbered page and has to physically turn the page to see what's next. Otherwise, the reader always has the chance to glance ahead and see what visuals are in store for the next few panels.

So take advantage of that rare chance to

surprise the reader and come up with compelling conclusions to each odd-numbered page (1, 3, 5, etc., unless your company puts ad pages in there and doesn't run them in even-numbered clumps, in which case it's difficult to know exactly which pages will give you this cliffhanger potential, so try to make the ending of every page pretty intriguing).

Give the reader a powerful reason to want to turn the page and find out what's coming next — introduce a new character who's speaking from off panel and won't be seen till the next page; have a character getting ready to deliver a mighty blow that won't connect (or miss) until the next page; have the bad guy sneaking up on the unsuspecting good guy... Whatever it takes to make the most dramatic moments of your story occur right at the bottom of those odd-numbered pages.

This is especially important if you have a humorous visual pay-off. Put the setup at the bottom of the odd-numbered pages and the big sight gag at the top of your even-numbered pages.

It's not easy to arrange your story this way, but if you think about it as you're *organizing* your story (as discussed last issue and in point #1 above), you'll find it also isn't as hard as you might think. A lot of times the hardest thing about organizing a story is knowing where to start, and by thinking of your story in these terms — climaxes at the bottom of every odd-numbered page — suddenly a structure to your story starts to form where there wasn't one before.

Speaking of odd and even pages, also keep in mind that (barring ad pages that mess up the odd-even pattern of the issue), any double-page spread needs to be placed on an even-odd combination — pages 2 and 3, 4 and 5, 6 and 7, etc. If you plot a double-page spread for pages 7 and 8 and nobody catches it, there's going to be a really ugly scene at the printers when that first proof of your issue comes off the presses.

Along these lines, I'd say avoid full-page "splash" panels on odd-numbered pages, since the reader's going to have a lot of trouble keeping his eye from straying ahead to that dramatic page while he's trying to read the even-numbered page the precedes it.

In general, your really dramatic visual information will work better if it's sprung on the reader toward the top of your even-numbered pages Then you can spend the rest of that two-page unit addressing exposition that'll allow you to build toward the next big visual pay-off at the top of the next even-numbered page.

Again, it's not easy to do, but it does give you a direction and approach to apply to get you started in organizing your story. And don't feel this pattern needs to be imposed on all kinds of stories. You can do a perfectly wonderful comic book about
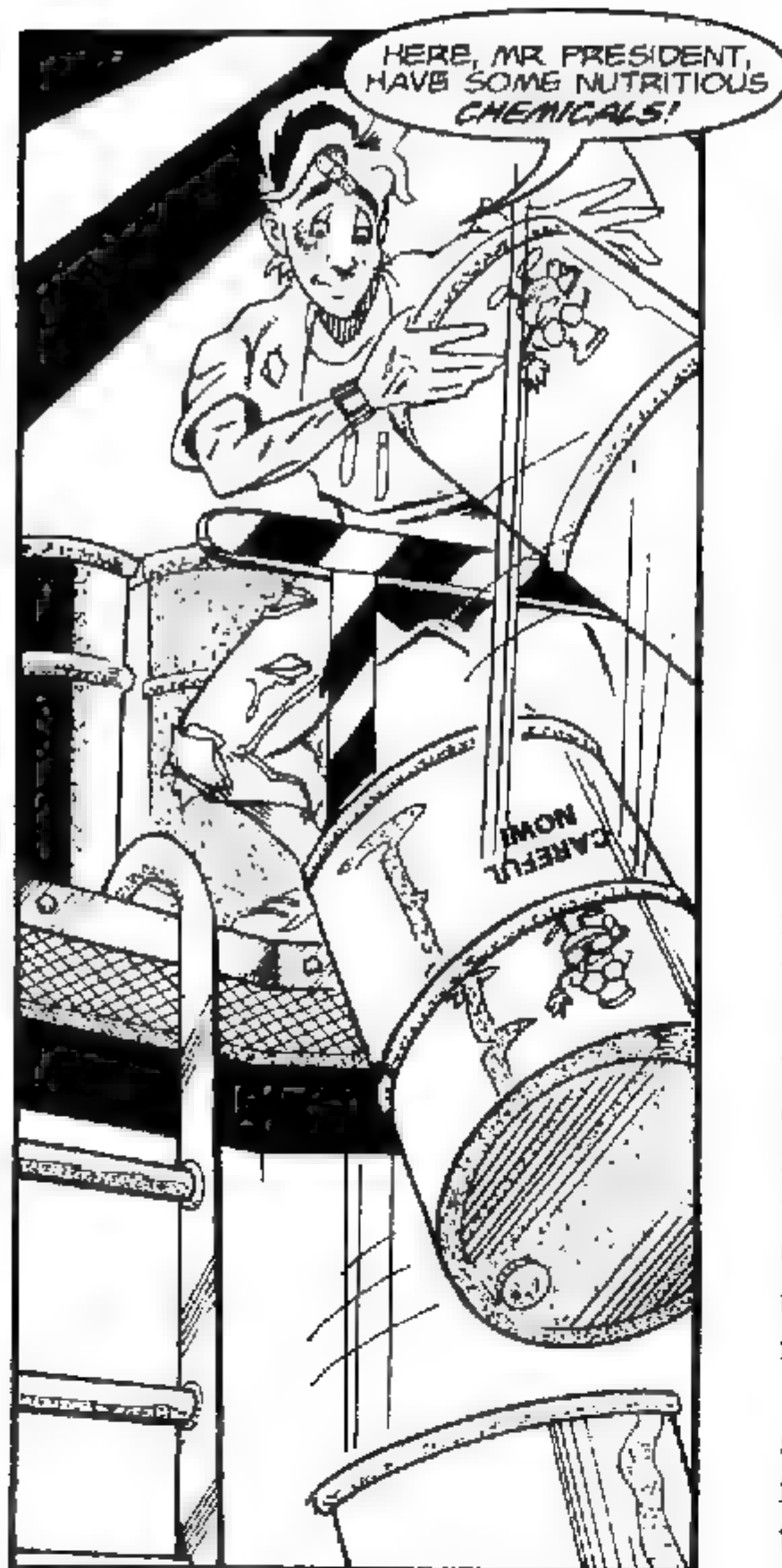
When you script a panel like this one use ALL CAPS to indicate where you want the letterer to use boldface So the script for this panels reads: MORTY Here, Mr President, have some nutritious CHEMICALS!

two people sitting on a sofa having a lengthy conversation and if it's a good story, people are going to be driven to keep turning those pages even if there never is a dramatic visual pay-off. There are an infinite number of ways — many obvious, a lot of them subtle — to make people want to turn that page, and the more of them that you can use in your stories, the more varied, interesting and compelling your stories are going to be.

8) In a script, use a format that organizes your directions separately from your captions and dialogue

There are a lot of different script formats and if you don't have one that you prefer, ask your editor to send a sample of a format he likes. Sometimes the editor will INSIST you follow his preferred format

Whatever script format you settle on should be well organized (as discussed above in point #3) and should make it extremely easy to distinguish between your instructions to the artist and the script itself. That way, it'll be easy for you, the editor and the artist to read just the captions and dialogue in a smooth, quick fashion and get some idea of how the script itself will flow.

If the captions and dialogue are buried within your instructions to the artist, nobody's ever going to get a good feel for

the flow of your script until the letterer gets it down on the page of artwork, and by then it'll be too late for significant re-writing.

Our favorite script format has the instructions to the artist written in all capital letters single-spaced extending across the full width of the page, while the captions and dialogue are in standard upper and lower case, double-spaced and only filling the right half of the page. This makes the dialogue easy to read separately from the instructions, and it also subtly encourages you to write with brevity, since using just half the page makes each passage look and feel longer than if you stretched it across the full width of the page.

One advantage of doing the dialogue in upper/lower case is that you can use all caps to indicate which words are to be bold-faced by the letterer (e.g., if you want the word "chemicals" to appear in boldface in the following passage, the script would read: "Here, Mr. President, have some nutritious CHEMICALS!").

In general, you should probably double-space the dialogue and captions on your full scripts because the editor's always going to want to scribble in little changes here and there. But I think the preferred custom is to single-space your directions to the artist in both plots and scripts, since any changes are likely to be a lot more involved than something that can be scribbled in between double-spaced lines. Instead, leave decent-sized margins on your plots and scripts, so relatively detailed notes can be scribbled in those margins when a change is necessary Double-spacing probably wouldn't hurt anything, except it's just a little harder on the eyes, and artists' instructions (at least the artists' instructions we used to write) are hard enough for editors to slog through without any little added handicaps.

9) Read your dialogue out loud to make sure it sounds natural

The best way to see how your script will sound in somebody's head is to read it out loud. In fact, if you know a third party who's willing to read it back to you, that's a way to get lots of good feedback and also find out how your words strike somebody who didn't write them and isn't automatically hearing the inflections and accents you're envisioning.

This third party can also tell you if the script stands pretty well on its own in terms of communicating the basic story and getting the reader hooked and eager to find out what's coming next. A lot of people think the art should be enough to practically tell the story by itself, but I think that's backwards. The words are what should be practically telling the story by themselves, because you never know what visual detail is going to get lost on any individual reader, but the words are there in plain black and white for everyone to

access.

As you're reading the script out loud, listen for passages that come across as awkward or stilted. Then try verbally to re-word them, just speaking out loud and informally. If you stumble across the way someone would "really say it," scribble those words down right away (before you forget exactly how you phrased it) and, if it really tells the story as well and sounds better, go with the new version.

This is also a good time to listen for repetition. If a word or phrase pops up too often, now's the time to catch it. If you think you may be hearing something too often, go back to your computer and do a word search through your script and see how often and how close together that word or phrase pops up.

Sometimes you have to figure out two or three ways to say the same thing and just start alternating between them. (These are some of the same points I made back in Sketch #7, so for more advice on writing good dialogue, look up my column in that issue.

In general, you should probably double-

Well, that's about all I've got to say on the matter at this point. There's a ton more you have to think about in writing a plot or a script, but a lot of it I touched on in Sketch #7 and #9. So we'll wrap it up here with a promise to re-visit the topic when any of you pass along your questions and comments regarding plots and scripts.

See you then.

Read the dialogue out loud to make sure it sounds natural and tells a fairly intelligible story independent of the artwork In this panel from Dead Kid #1, the balloons didn't end up pointing to the right characters, but it makes little difference because the dialogue tells the reader basically what's happening without knowing exactly who's saying what.

# eComics: Digital Presentation

by Mike Maydak
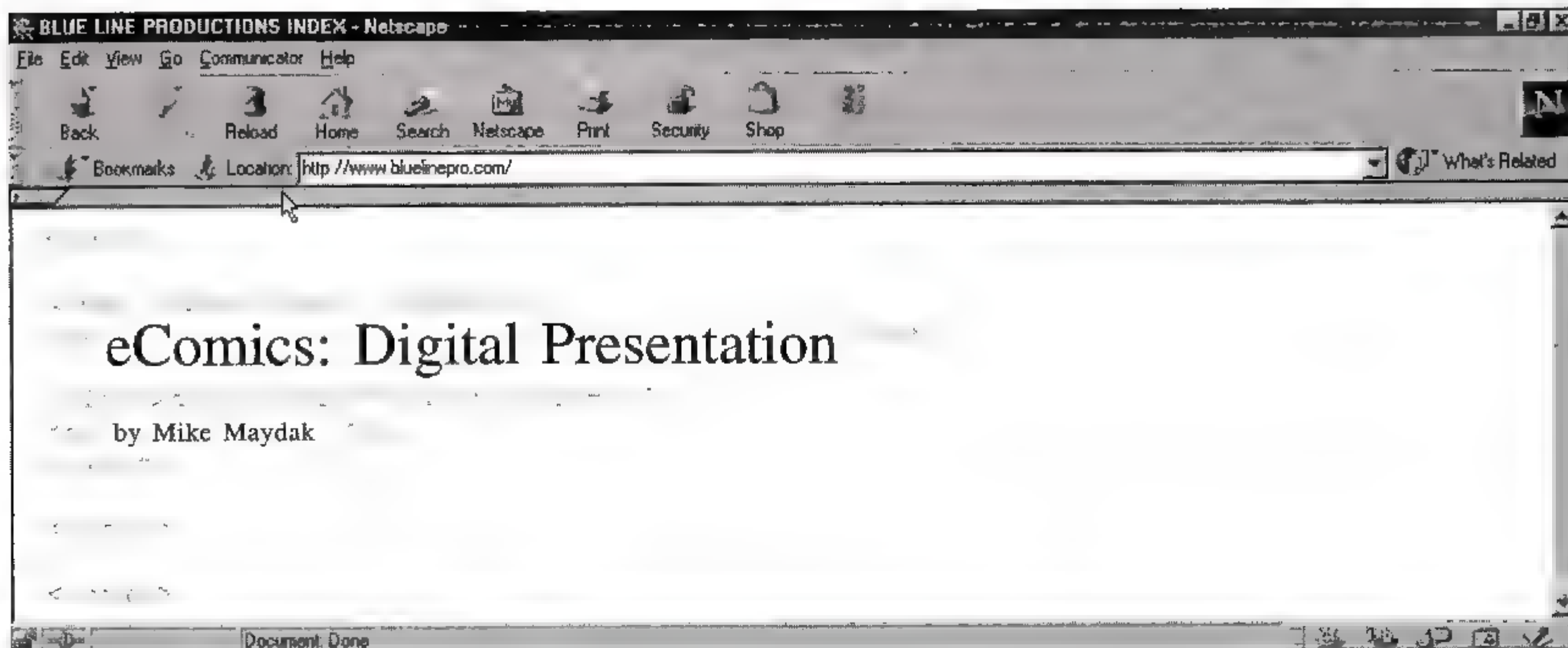
The application of digital technologies has given creators across the board, especially in comics, access to a huge palette of opportunity. Never before has it been so possible to transform imaginative expression into physical reality, building a bridge to others to allow them to see what you see. The key to creating this link from your mind to your audience lies in one aspect.

What is this aspect you may ask? Easy; PRESENTATION. An aspect that all comic creators before have come across, whether they stuck with the trends or made their own way. Panel composition, color use, style, etc... are all part of presentation. But how can we apply presentation to make surreal ideas into delicious eComic eye candy?

To answer this, you may think we should consult the eComic Book Cookbook for a recipe. Unfortunately, no one has come out with a complete edition yet that covers everything. Electronic publishing is a new medium, there is plenty still being discovered. But what we can do is take a look around the industry and see what's being done. Hopefully you can find something from one or more of the eComics we are reviewing that may work with your own project.

I would just like to make one thing clear before we start; I'm not advocating piracy, sorry all. What I'm saying is you should take a look at what's out there, see if it will work for you, and then put your own twist on it. Kind of like Captain America and Fighting America... well, maybe that's not a great example, but you get my point.
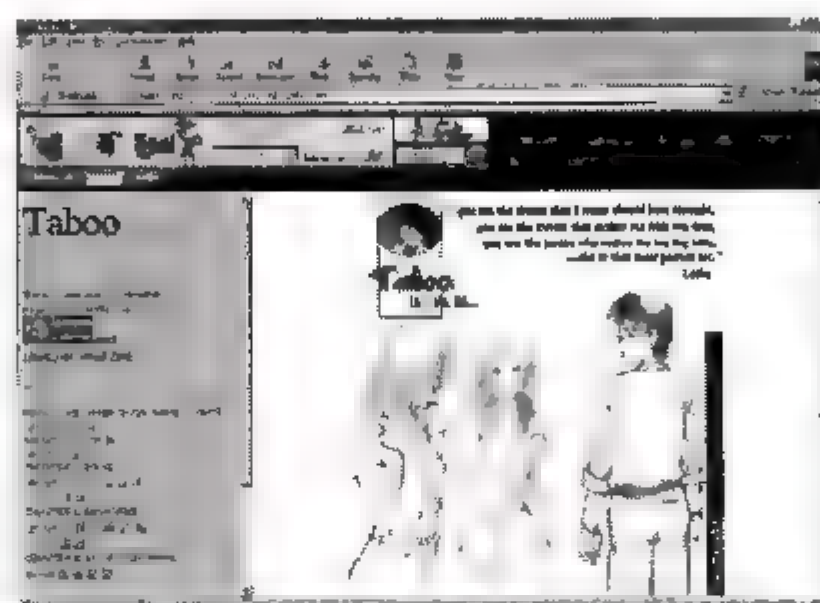
www.maf.8k.com/TABOOMAIN.htm

The eComic "Taboo Let Me Be" may seem to be on the bare bones side, but it's layout is effective and to the point. The two-window presentation, the left serving as a clickable table of context and the right displaying the page (image), allows the viewer to have everything in front of him. This is good in that you can instantly jump around pages instead of flipping though pages you've already seen. On the same token, this extra freedom takes away the storytelling control of the creator. It's just a bit too easy to ignore the importance or reading the pages in order.

http://www.borderwalker.com
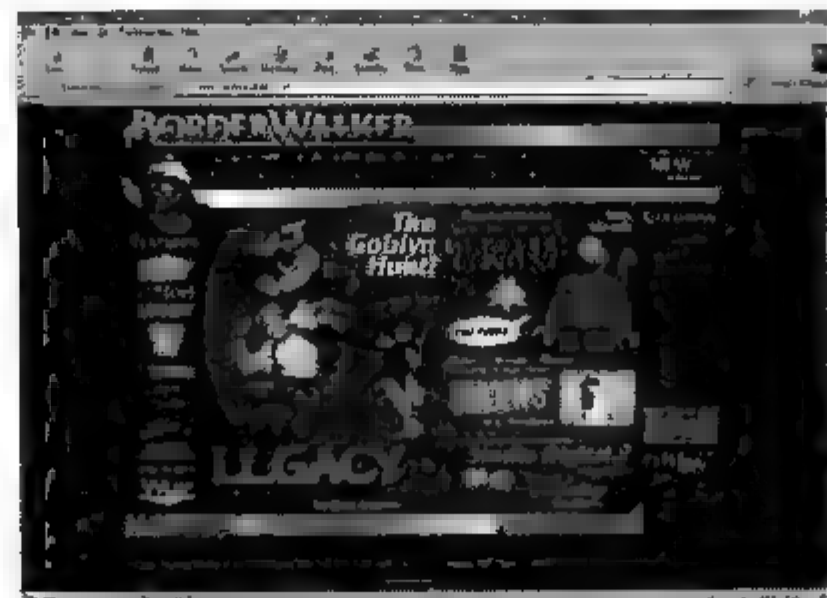
Borderwalker.com, the Online Comics Magazine, is a great example of many different eComics with different approaches to their own presentation. For our purposes, we'll focus on Chris Watkin's "Legacy Dawning, The Goblyn Hunt!" In this eComic, Chris has taken several interesting approaches to compiling his comic. Instead of settling with the two classic colors of black and white, the white has been replaced with a tan parchment-like texture, giving the illusion that the comic is on some sort of paper. Also, the comic is laid out in long vertical strips, cutting away the need to load multiple pages yet limiting your ability in your panel composition, such as a surprise splash page. I'm not sure which idea lead to the other, but the long vertical strips and tan parchment textures compliment each other tremendously to simulate an actual scroll.

http://www.scottmccloud.com
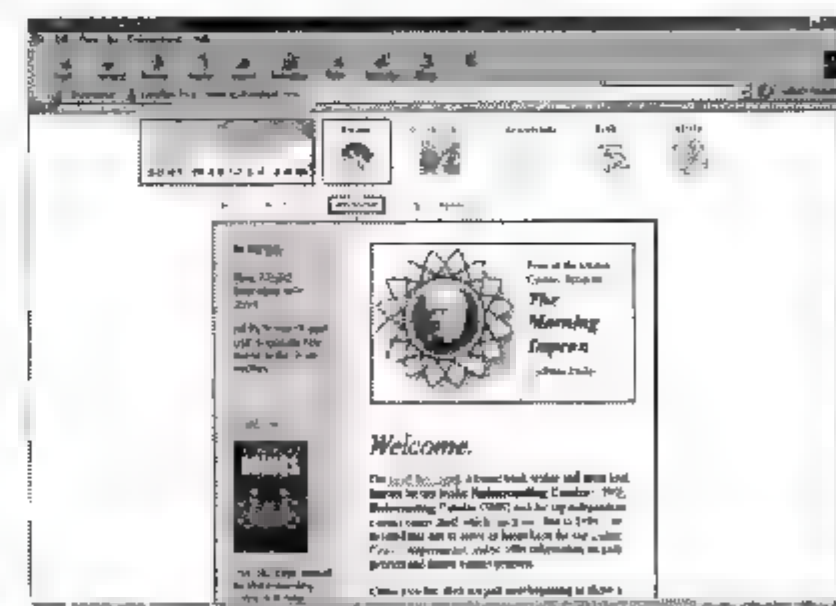
It may seem odd, or somewhat paradoxical, that Scott McCloud's work would be one of the sites reviewed in this article, for his own "I Can't Stop Thinking" online comic covers many concepts about eComics such as presentation. He has a knack for breaking down aspects of online comics in laymen's' terms, though some have accused him of making the matter more complex then it really is. Nevertheless, he is still an excellent source to check out about online comics. What really

impressed me about Scott's presentation is his use of, in his own words, "trails" and "infinite canvas'", terms which he referred to in his fourth installment of ICST. With the use of a simple line, Scott has been able to guide his readers in directions unimagined by previous storytelling techniques. For a full-blown explanation, check out the site and see how the man himself explains it. I cannot do it justice

http://www.comicsdigital.com
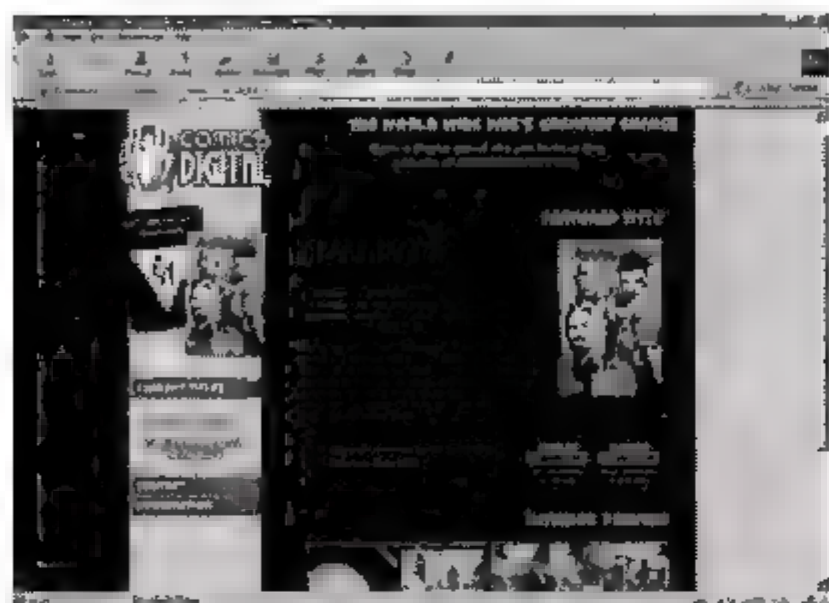
Comics Digital has been able to create a self-contained eComic that looks, reads, and almost feels like a real comic. The comic is downloadable, creating a file on your computer that is that book. This allows the reader to actually feel he has the eComic on his computer, instead of just reading it off a website. From my discussions with Comics Digital's Rick

Beckly, I have learned they have achieved this by combining the technologies of several different software programs, Flash being one of them. In addition, Beckly was adamant on removing the aspect of scrolling, preferring to use a more traditional means to present their story. In Comics Digital's free preview of Amandara, the comic was laid out just like a printed version. There are no navigation menus, buttons, or other click able features, just a right and left page that filled the screen. All you had to do was click the right page for the next page and the left for the previous page. Beckly is constantly looking for ways to refine his system, making Comics Digital one to keep an eye on.

http://www.marvel.com
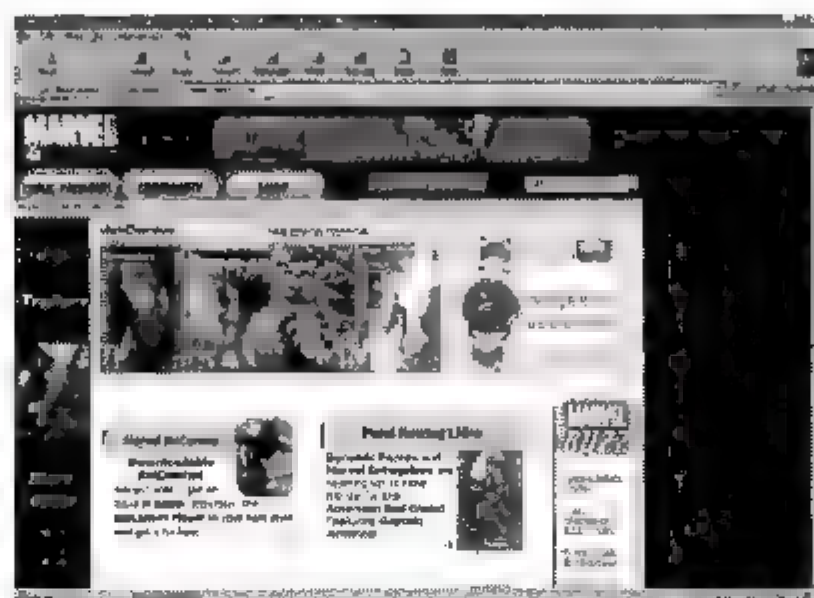
Though Marvel doesn't have much variation on presenting their online comics, they do have a wide selection of

well-constructed titles to pick from. Marvel has taken a very interesting and effective approach to their presentation. Using Flash, Marvel has been able to solve several problems that are associated with eComics. If a standard comic was to fit entirely in one screen without any scrolling, the pictures and letting would have to be adjusted or they would become hard to depict and read. To solve this Marvel made each panel interactive, making them become bigger and readable In addition to that there is a zoom feature, removing any excuse that you can't see what going on. Everything is included from the original print version, even the ads. Since there is some heavy downloading time for each comic, a memory game is provided to past the time, surely easing the anxiety of waiting comic fans and adding to the enjoyment of their eComic experience.

In Sketch #11 we will begin an ongoing review section that will be included with this column of two to three independent's online comics, much like a portfolio review corner for eComics. If you wish to submit you eComic for possible review, please drop me a line at mikem@bluelinepro.com.

M²

How To Draw VEHICLES

by Jason Howard

When I was a wee lad showing my portfolio around at comic book conventions, an established pro, whose name I can't remember, gave me some advice that I'll never forget. In my sample pages a couple panels showed the main character getting out of a car. "What is that?" The pro asked pointing at the car. "It…It's a car." I stammered. "Oh yeah, what kind?" "It's no kind, I made it up." I replied. "Where are the side view mirrors?" He asked, "And what about the bumpers? And turn signal lights? And the front windshield is perfectly flat, on any car I have seen the glass has a curve to it." Finally the pro gave me a break. "Listen," He said, "I know that you made the car up, I can tell just by looking at it. I can also tell that you don't know what a car really looks like. There is nothing wrong with drawing a car from your imagination, but it had better look like a car. Anyone reading this story will recognize that there is something wrong with that car. It is your job as an artist to make the story believable, and that car is not believable. Think of it this way, when you draw stuff in your comics, you are like the set designer for a movie. You decide what types of buildings are in the background, you decide the style of clothing people wear, and you decide what kind of cars people drive. But the best part is that unlike a movie, in comics you have an unlimited budget. Cost is not an option, you just have to draw it and it exists. You could have had your character drive a Rolls Royce or a Ferrari, but instead you chose to have him drive a shoebox with wheels."

I had never looked at my pages that way before. What the pro said was true, I had drawn a crummy looking car, and the thing was that I knew I could have done better but I hadn't seen the car as an important element. Far too often, beginning artists do what I did - take the easy way out and draw a shoebox with wheels, when with just a little time and effort we could be drawing Ferraris. In this article I will show you some of the things that I have done to learn how to draw better vehicles. So grab your pencil and fasten your seatbelt!

Hit the gym

It has been said that you don't really know what something looks like until you know how to draw it. If I were to ask you to draw a smiley face, you could probably do it in a second without even having to think about it. Why? Because you understand the basic shapes necessary to construct a smiley face and you have probably drawn many smiley faces in the past. The same principle holds true for drawing more complex objects, like Apache helicopters (see examples 1 & 2). It just takes a little more work and time for your mind to understand the basic shapes necessary to construct something complex like a helicopter, and the only way to learn those shapes is by drawing. So, let's get drawing!
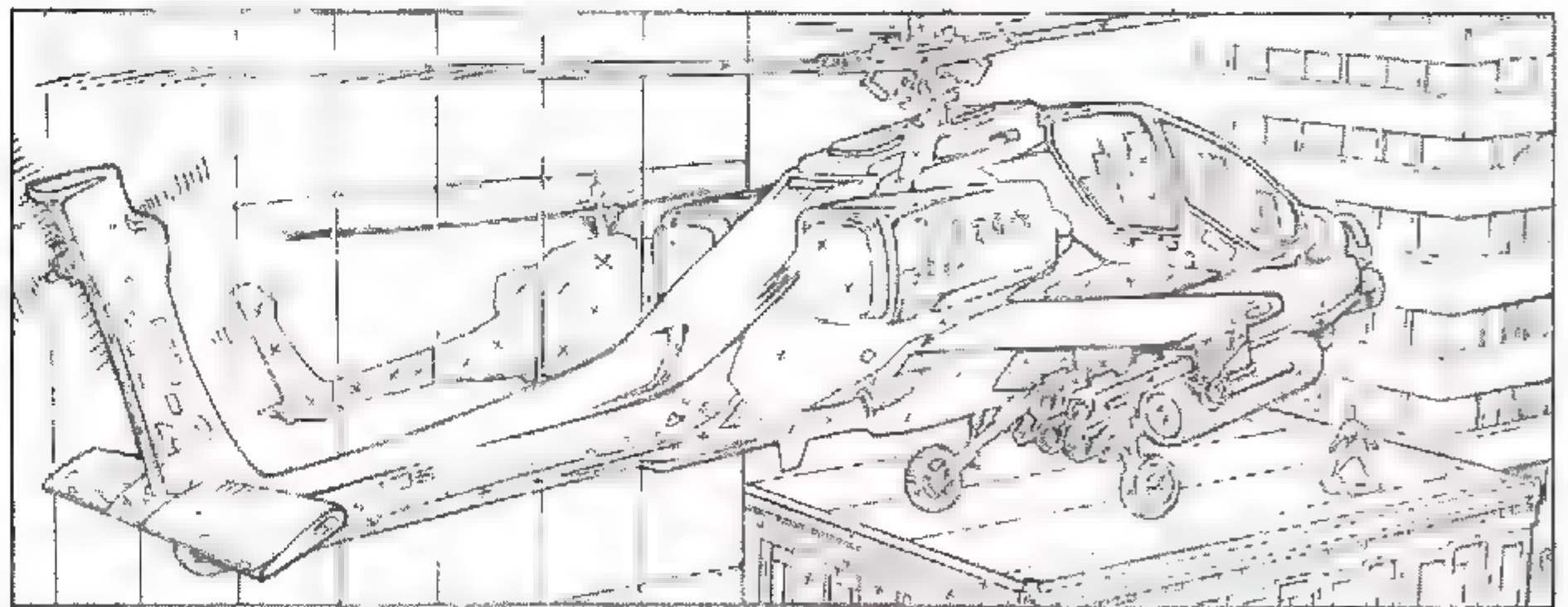
example 1
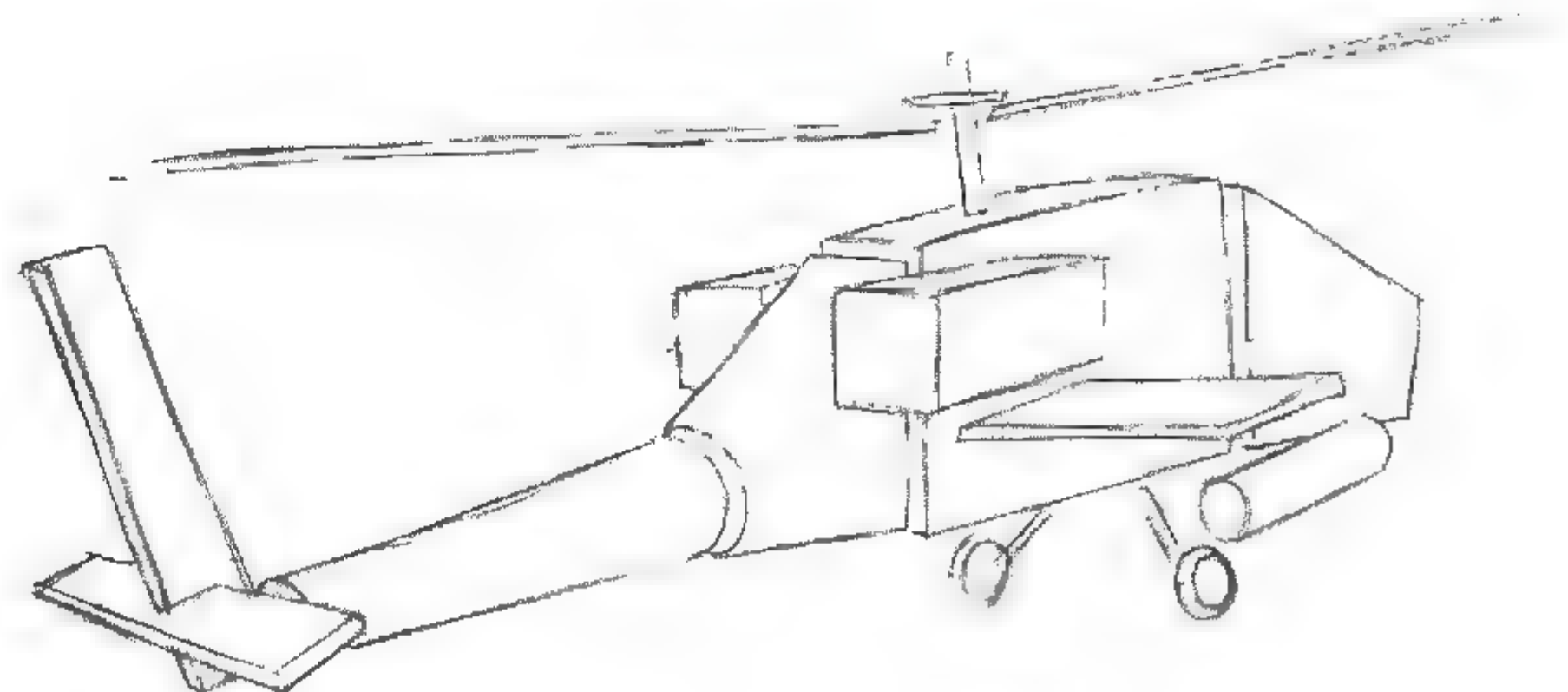
example 2

First you have to do a little legwork. Visit your local library, bookstore or the Internet and gather photos of real vehicles. Using these photos as reference, fill your sketchbook with realistic drawings of these vehicles (example 3). Draw cars until you start to understand how cars are really put together. Identify units of measurement and comparison on a car. For example, using the size of the wheel as a measuring tool, how many wheels long and high is a sports car? How does this compare to the size of a pickup truck? Start paying attention to how cars look in perspective. Notice the ellipse shape that the wheels make in perspective, and how this changes if the front wheel is turned. Look at what areas tend to be in shadow, and how the different surfaces of a car reflect their surroundings. Make the same observations through drawing other basic vehicles like boats, motorcycles, and fighter jets. Put real effort into these drawings, as the things you learn will serve as the information your brain will pull from the next time you draw from your imagination. While you will never understand every type of vehicle well enough to draw it perfectly from your imagination, investing this time drawing real vehicles in your sketchbook will help give you a better understanding of their basic structural components. This will help you when you design your own vehicles and it will make it faster for you to draw vehicles in the future. Even if you can't get every detail right from your imagination, you will have having a working knowledge of vehicles and their basic structure This will go a long way towards making your vehicles look and feel "right".

Your sketchbook is your practice gym. It's like a basketball player who not only spends many hours playing basketball, but also spends time practicing specific aspects of his game. Some drills will help his shooting, other drills will improve ball-handling skills, and others will help his rebounding. Improving each individual skill will help make him a better basketball player when game time comes. You need to be spending time in your sketchbook working on improving the individual skills that go into being a comic book artist. If you know that you have a weak area, attack it in your sketchbook until it becomes a strong area. Enough practice will make you good at drawing anything. You bring these individual skills together in your comic pages. Just like the basketball player, it is important to be constantly playing the game (in this case drawing pages). You may have some God-given talent, but unless that talent is developed through hard work, you may never reach your full potential.
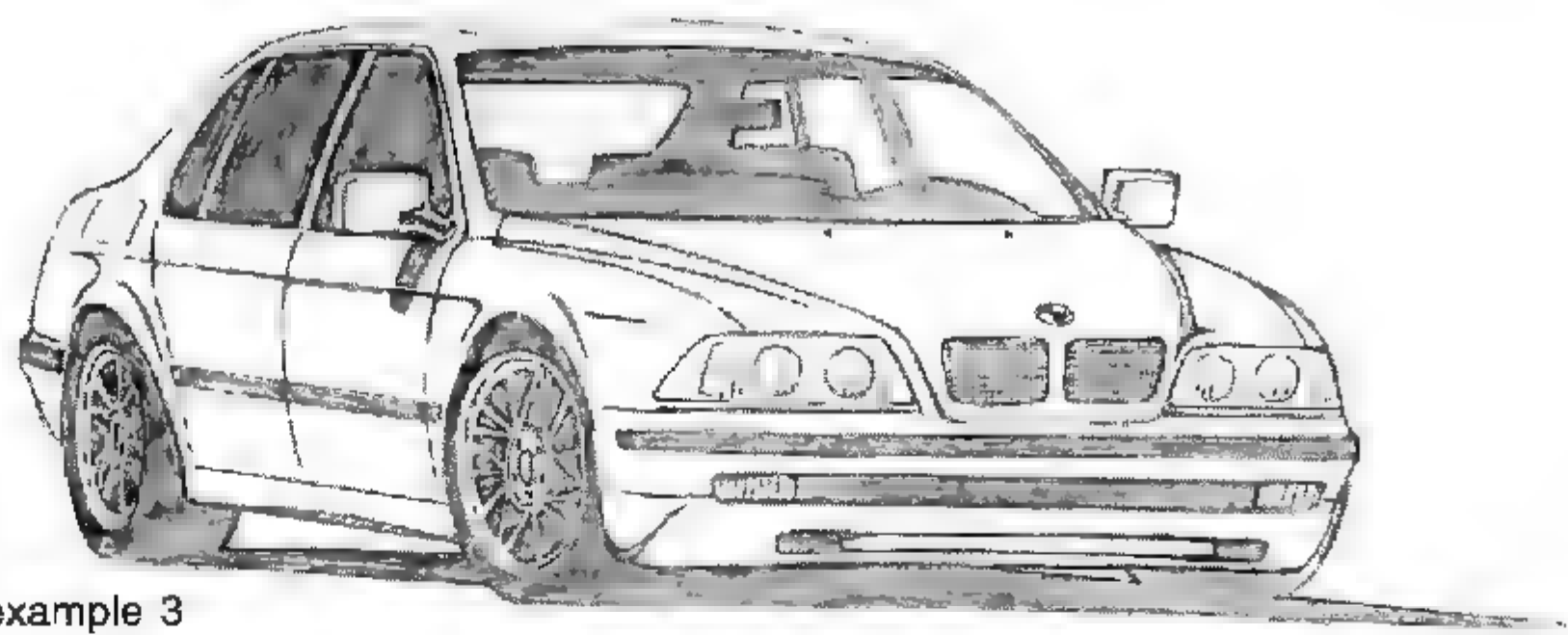
example 3

Free your imagination

Use your knowledge of how real vehicles look as a springboard for your imagination. Don't hold back. One of the coolest things about drawing comics is being able to design vehicles and things that don't exist in real life, and have them exist in the reality of your story. Unlike a real life engineer you don't have to concern yourself with how something will actually work. In comics things just have to look believable and look like they could work. I find that very freeing for my imagination. Actually knowing how real vehicles are put together will help you add believable touches to vehicles that you may design out of your imagination. That is why spending the time in your sketchbook is so important. Now, obviously the story will dictate much of what you are able to draw. If you are drawing a story about mobsters in Chicago during the 1950's, the cars should not look like they came out of Blade Runner On the other hand, Blade Runner cars may fit right in if you were drawing a story that takes place on another planet or in the future.

A good exercise to get your vehicle design juices flowing is to take a vehicle that exists in everyday life and redesign what it might look like in the future or under different circumstances. In example 4 I have drawn one of those scooters that have been so popular the last couple of years. In example 5 I have drawn what that scooter may look like 30 years from now. Add a little anti-gravity technology and jet propulsion, and now instead of punk kids riding around in my driveway, punk kids will be landing on my roof.
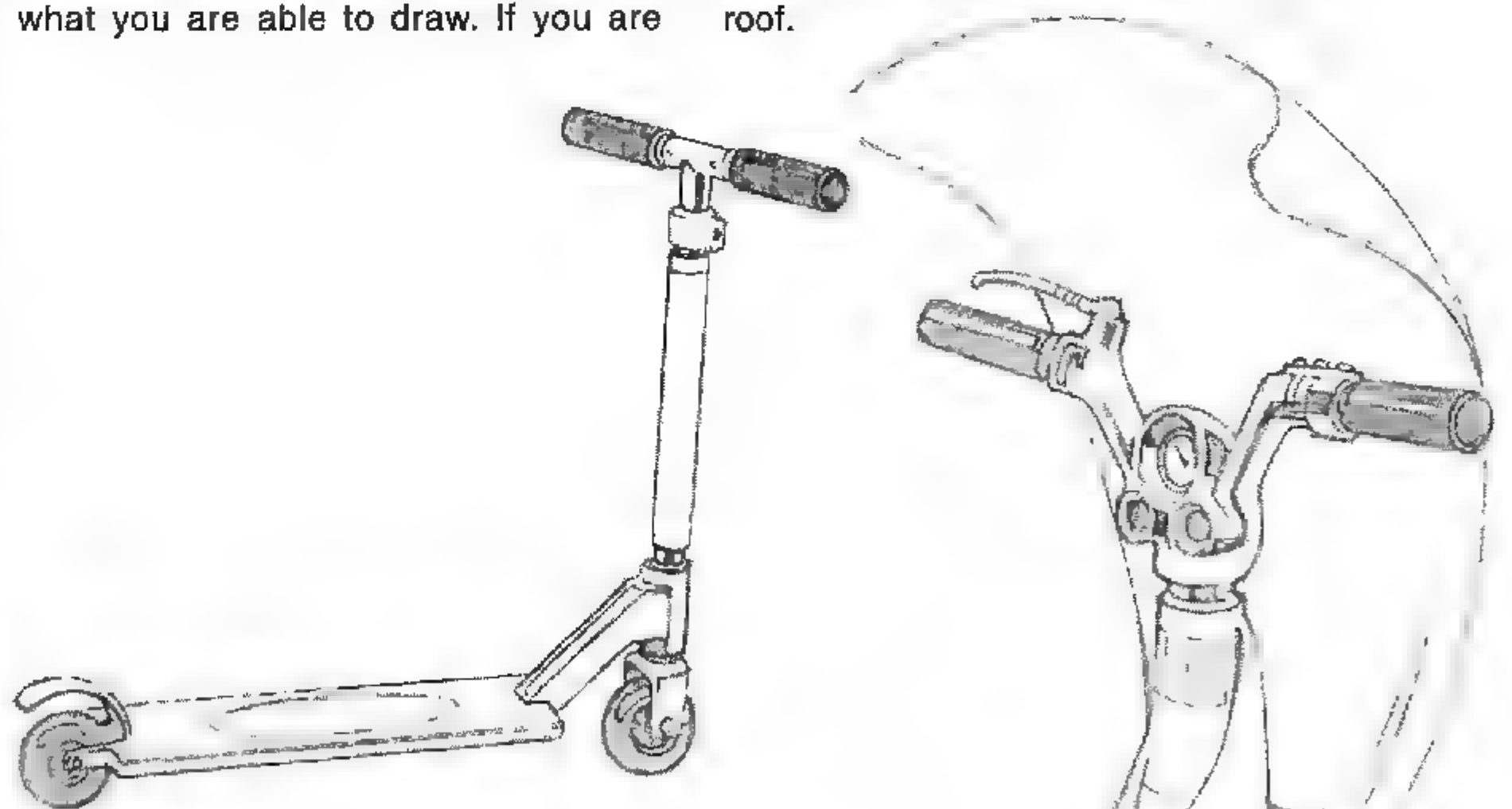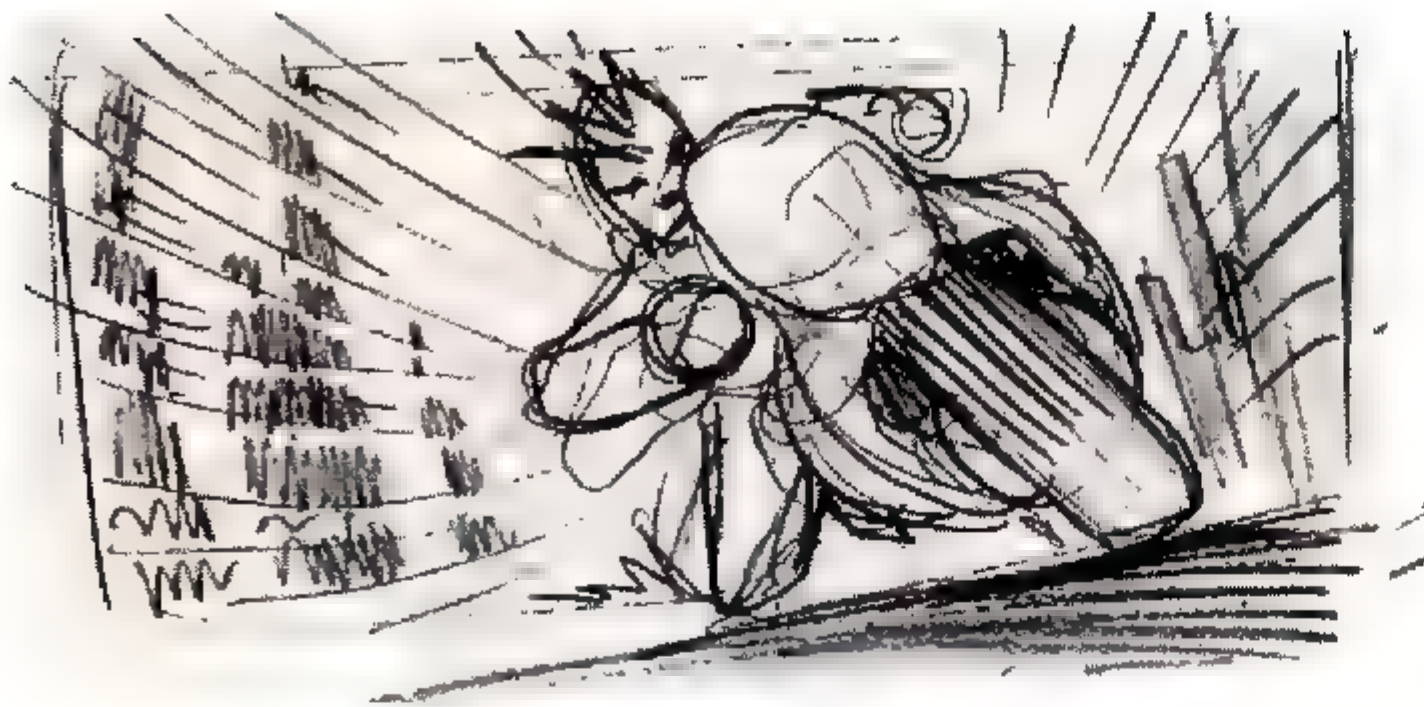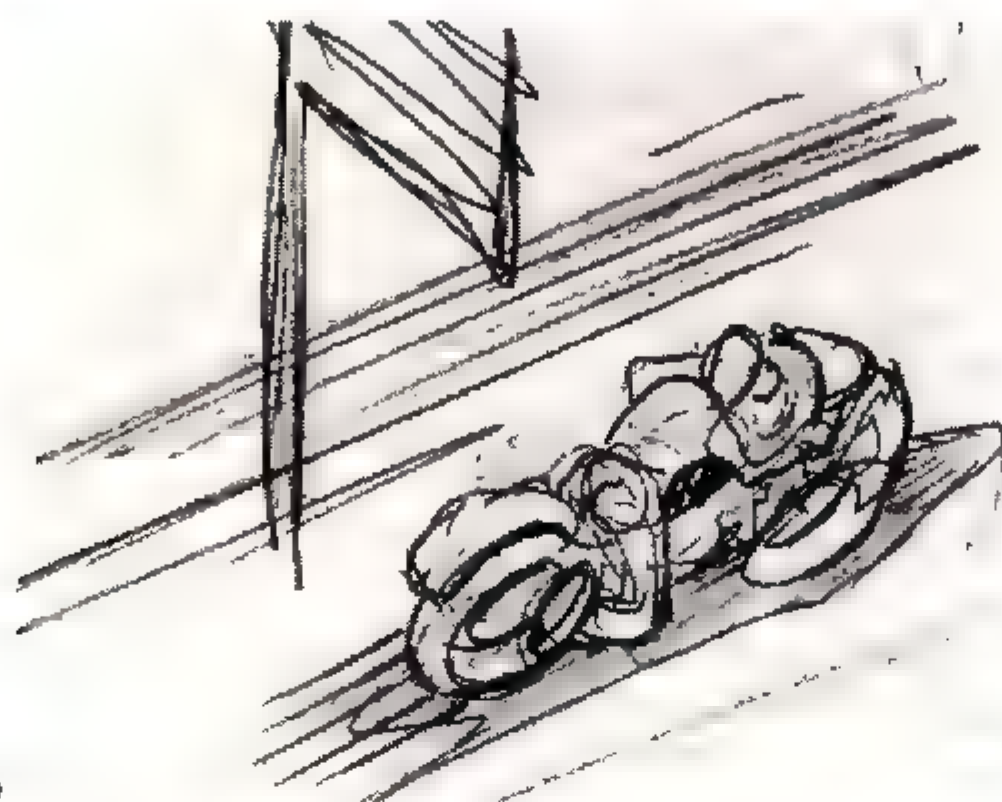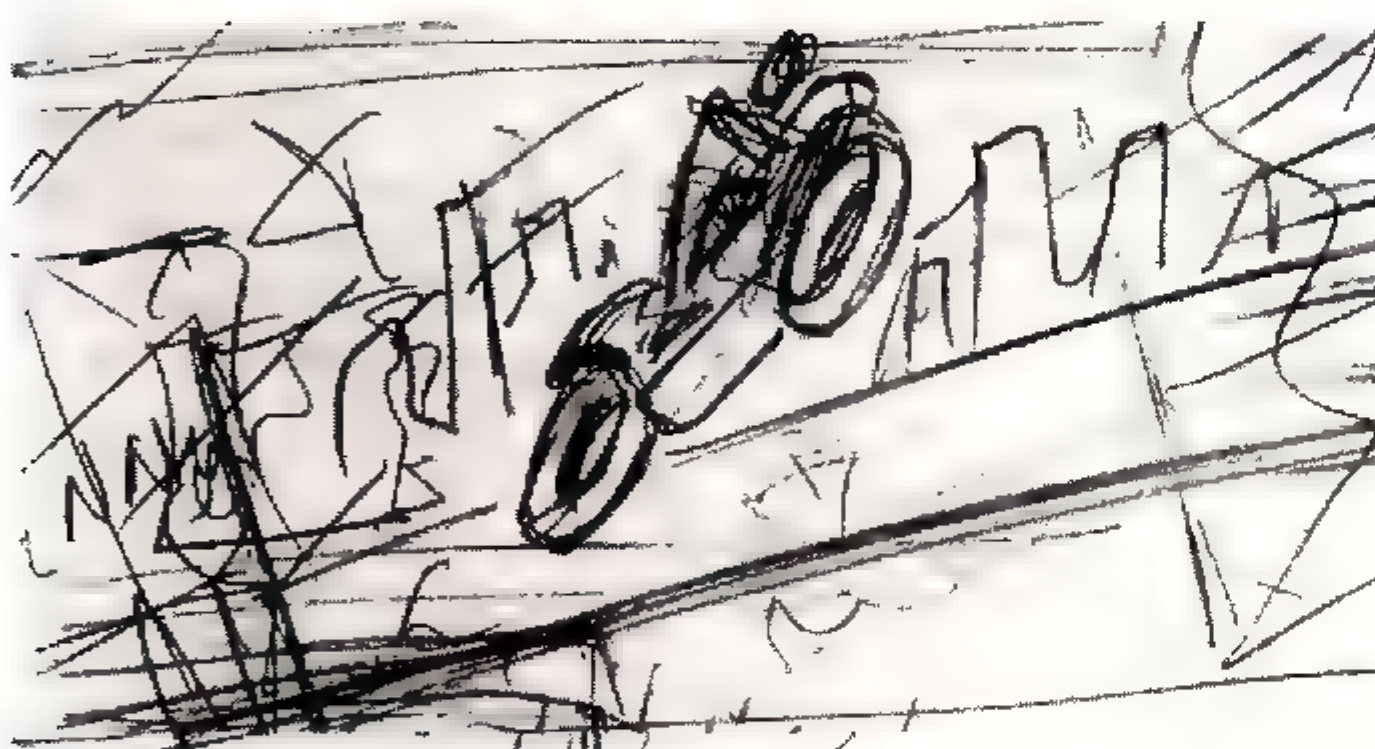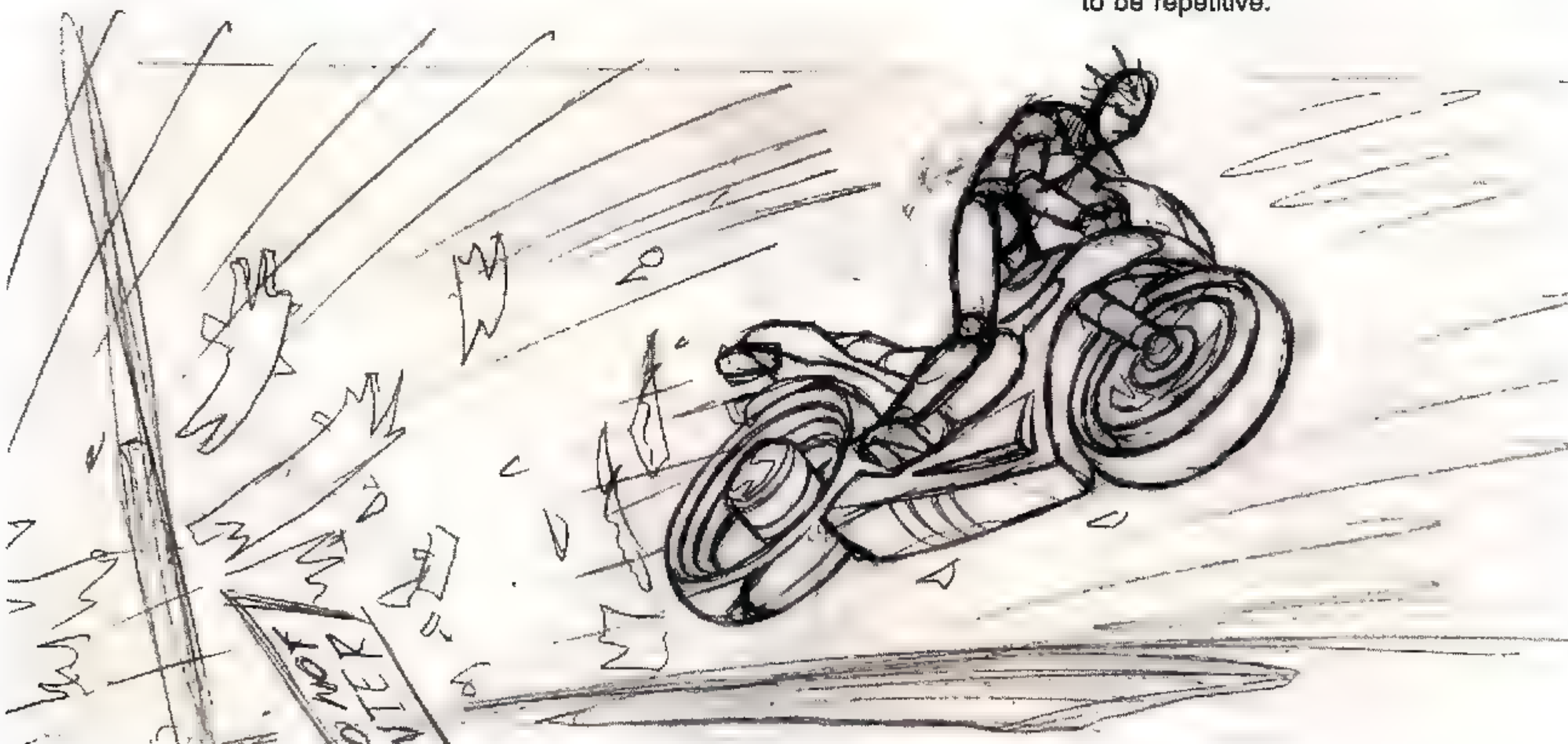

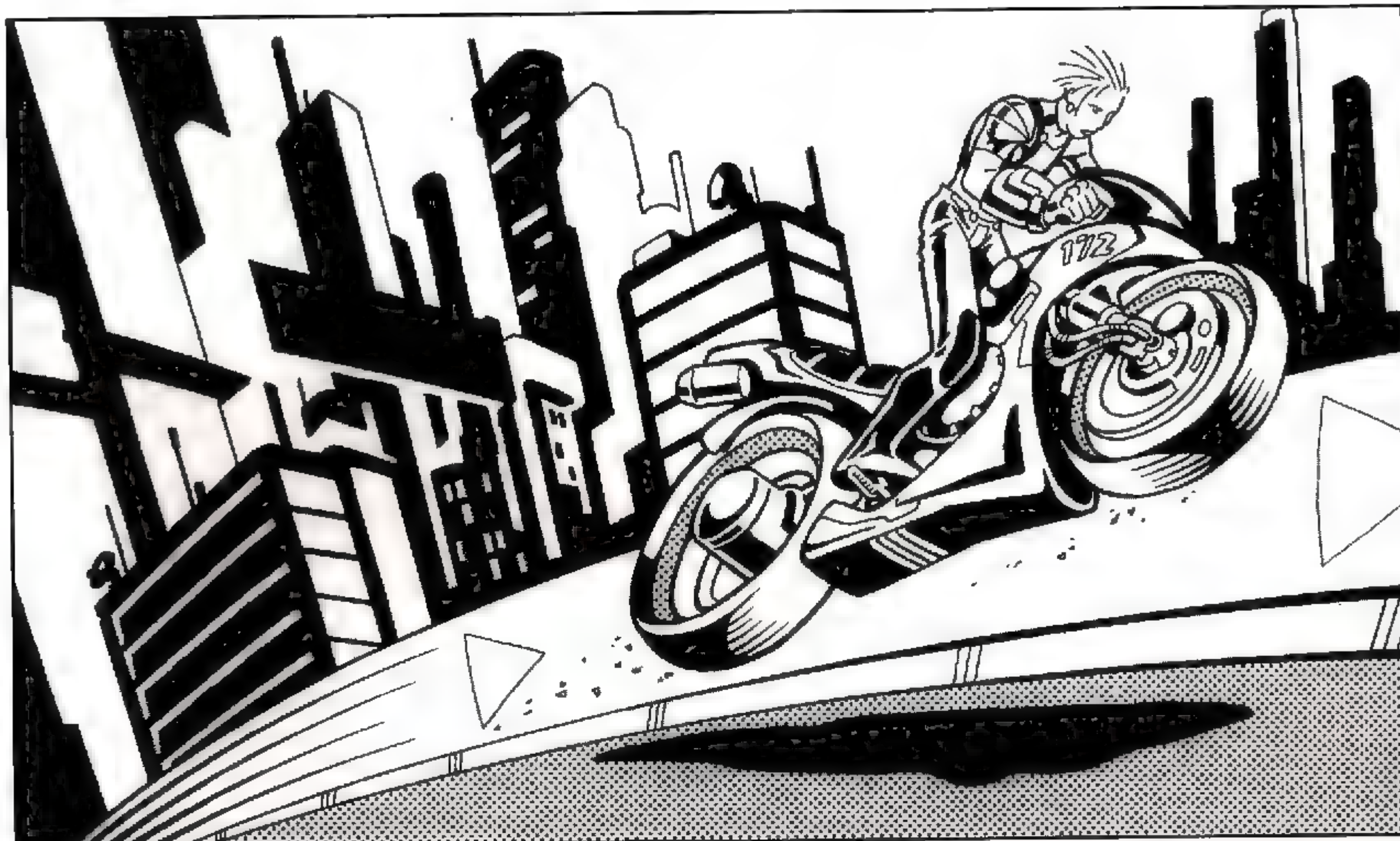example 4
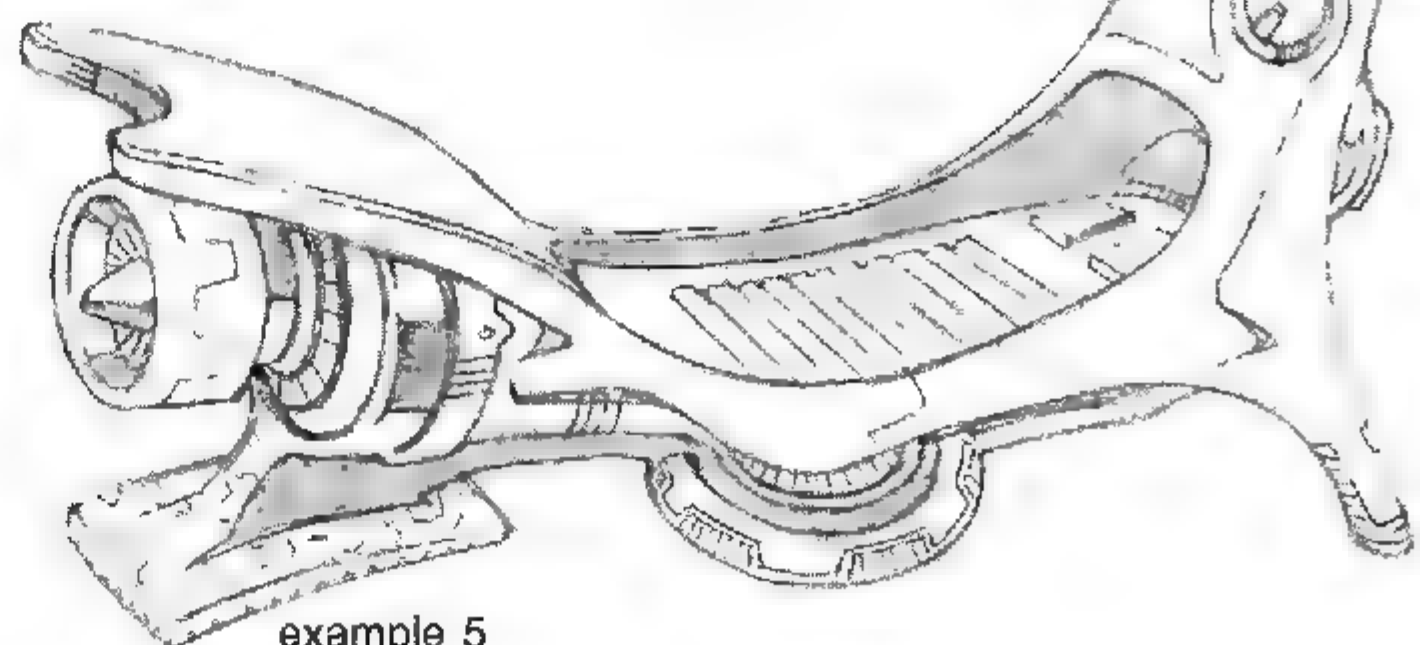
example 5

example 6a

example 6b

example 6c

Don't love your doodles

So far I have talked a little about the theory behind drawing vehicles and some practical things that you can do to improve your ability to draw vehicles. This section I am going to show you the process that I go through to actually draw a vehicle. Now I'm not saying that this is the only way, it's just the way that I do it. Like any other drawing method, if it works for you, use it. If it doesn't, find something that does. The example that I'm using is from my upcoming book, Local 205. The story called for a panel where the main character, Sarah, is riding her motorcycle across town.

I started out with small rough doodles, just to figure out the angle that I wanted to use (example 6). Notice that I didn't worry about having the details right. That comes later. It is important to be loose and not get stuck on an idea too quickly. My goal at this stage is to determine what angle is going to work best for the story. By doing quick little doodles I am not very invested in the drawing, that way it is easy for me to scrap an idea and try something different. Don't fall in love with your doodles! If an idea isn't working, trash it and move on. Even if the first idea seems like it might work, try a couple others just to confirm that your initial idea is the best one. I tried three different angles, one from directly in front of the bike, one from above the bike and one from below. I really liked the one from in front of the bike as a good dynamic shot, but I decided to go with the one from below. I thought that showing the bike jumping in the air would be cool, and it also allowed for a nice cityscape in the background, which fit well with the story. I had also used a similar type of straight-on shot of the bike elsewhere in the story and I didn't want to be repetitive.

example 7

example 8

My next step was to do a tighter drawing, focusing more on the structure of the motorcycle and figure (example 7). Because this story takes place in the future, I spent some time when I started working on the book designing some of the vehicles that would show up. I used these initial designs to make sure the motorcycle was drawn consistently throughout the book. This drawing was then lightboxed onto the final board where the finished details and shadows were added.

Here we have the finished inked panel (example 8). Notice the similarities between the finished piece and the beginning doodle that I started with. The doodle served as a roadmap for the finished drawing; it may not have looked like much but all the key elements were there.

While this article certainly doesn't cover everything you will need to know about drawing vehicles, hopefully it gives you a good start. It is important to remember that the only thing that is guaranteed to make you a better artist is time spent drawing. There is no magic solution or quick easy way. You have to love what you do and then spend time doing it. You may not notice an improvement overnight, but each time you draw you will be making little connections in your mind about how things should look. You will start to develop a style and learn your own methods and shortcuts for drawing. Over time, all these things will add up to big improvement. When I first got started drawing comics I wasn't good enough yet to know how bad I was, and how much better I had yet to be. All I saw was the first step, but once I made that step I saw that there was a whole stairway beyond it. This stairway is the road of improvement that all artists travel.

Good luck on your journey!
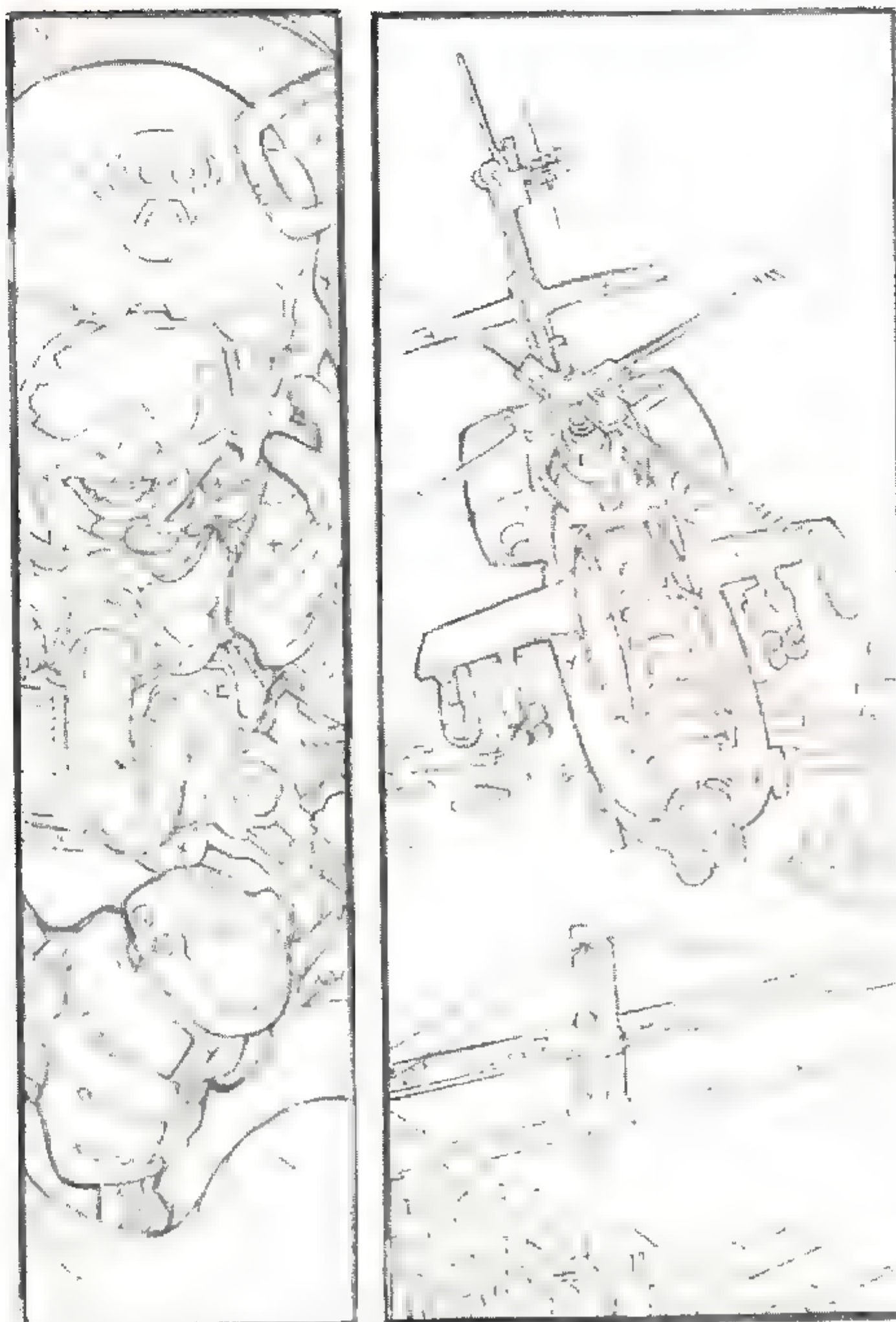
Example of a Apache Helicopter used within a story.

Letters Forum

I do 3D animation and modeling in my spare time and I have been playing around with converting a comic strip into a 3d stereoglyph version. My question is the time constraint that comic book artist face with when making strip, as pertaining how long does it take for a typical colorist to do a single page? From the moment that the colorist get the page to the finish job of the color.

R. Roberts

It really depends on the artwork and the type of coloring that the publisher is requesting, as well as how fast your computer runs. This is one of the most important things. A fast computer can save time. Flat coloring with a minimum amount of shading can be done within 4 to 6 hours. I've known some colorists that spend 8 to 16 hours on one piece of artwork.

B.

Hi,

I am interested in getting some pages to ink over copies of pencil samples and was wondering what the right kind of board/ paper would be. I think that some companies' web-sites recommend vellum, but I want to know what the exact kind would be for inking over pencils (something transparent?). Please let me know what works best.

Matthew Harrison

Matt,

I use a 300 series Strathmore (Premiere 300 from Blue Line Pro). It's thin enough that a good strong light table can shine through it, and it gives me a true surface to ink. Take the original artwork and copy it onto thin copier paper (18 lbs. or thinner).

B.

Hey,

I am just one of those rare-breeds that truly believes in giving credit where credit is due. I just gotta say, Excellent article, "Where do writers get their ideas?" for issue #8. Damn gooooood. Thanks! Your magazine is one of the few that is actually worth MORE than it's cover price, you have EVERY reason to succeed and I wish you and your magazine much continued success. I can tell y'all really CARE...

Suggestion/Question: I am sure it has crossed your collective minds, but ever think (maybe after awhile) of compiling the best of the best articles you publish? I would buy it. Anyway, thanks again.

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Bogdan

Sr. Art Director

Matt,

Tom has been a consistent contributor since issue one. I've personally enjoyed his articles and I agree; his articles make for a great column. We are currently looking to collect the first three issues of Sketch into a trade, but there's nothing set in stone yet. We'll keep you informed.

B.

Hello. I just bought Sketch Magazine issue #4. I absolutely love your magazine. I intend to subscribe late this week. Could you please tell me if back issues are available? I'm excited about becoming a member of Club Blue, purchasing art supplies, and your incredible library of comic related books. Thank you for such a great magazine.

Sincerely,

Jim Ruby,

Jim,

Welcome aboard. I believe you'll enjoy the issues since issue 4. We've had the opportunity to talk with Bill Tucci, Brian Bendis, Chuck Dixon, Dave Dorman, and Ed McGuinness. And the future doesn't look too bad with the Kubert brothers, Frank Cho and more.

B.

Dear Art Enthusiasts,

I want to compliment you on a very fine magazine. Being a Designer/Illustrator (and a comic-book penciller wannabe), I have definite opinions about the state of the industry.

Your magazine has come into its own at a very important time. Having just opened my own design and illustration studio (in the Atlanta area), I am extremely thankful for your magazine and articles. Even though you "direct" your comments to the comic-book industry, your articles and illustrations have helped me immensely with my own illustrations. Thank you.

As a comment about high-lighting more independent comic-book professionals, I agree that it would be of benefit to a lot of professionals (and up-and-comers), and I think that as a side-bar discussion, it would behoove "US" as fans and professionals to not forget our roots! There are many ways for "us" to promote each other.

All of us were able to find "Sketch" on the racks, and my comic-book store doesn't put it right out front, you have to hunt for it. Yet, we all seem able to do this.

As an open comment to everyone out

there; "Lets support each other!" Why don't people quit asking Sketch to provide information about all of the independents out there, and lets provide information to Sketch. With the Internet having the capabilities of transferring vast amounts of information, lets get together and promote each other.

• Provide links to each others websites! We are not in competition with each other, we are a family! Lets help each member of our family.

• Offer your comments on message boards. There are hundreds (if not thousands) of message boards dealing strictly with comics. CONTRIBUTE!!!!! Quit expecting your advertising to come from trade professionals, and help yourself and others.

• Offer trades with each other. Through networking, we can offer space in each other's books showcasing other independents! Or we can send each other our books, allowing one ore way for us to get the word out.

• Share! I have offered pro-bono, to covers for other indys, and in trade they have done covers for me. I have noticed that the "guest" cover penciller has gotten more comments than just keeping the book to myself. It has also taught me a lot, because I got to see someone else's interpretation of my characters.

• And lastly, Follow Through! I have had more e-mails requesting some sort of collaboration, and as a professional, when I respond positively, the initial request is usually met with missed deadlines, rushed artwork, or unsolicited changes in character design, etc. I have had many a person complain that they aren't being fairly treated in trying to break in to the big two, however, after a short correspondence, I realize the total lack of professionalism.

The independent market is an important and viable place for the next wave of comic-book professional, however it is up to us to keep the independent pool of talent as professional as possible. Its up to us!

Thank you again for the forum, and keep up the wonderful work!
Jerrett Lee Dornbusch
Creative Director
Dornbusch Design + Illustration Studios
dornbuschdesign@earthlink.net
PS: All comments are welcome. We are in this together!
Jarrett,
Thanks for the support and words. You've put lots on the table, and I'm looking forward to hearing if any one is willing to comment.
We have been developing the eComicswarehouse.com for creators who have a hard time getting their work published on paper. EComicwarehouse.com is a location that TOGETHER can help individual creators to get their projects launched as eComics, hopefully leading the way to their success. I like malls and all the different purchasing opportunities that they offer. Thus eComicswarehouse.com will be a "mall" where different creators can offer their creations.
B.

Hi Blue Line,

Thank you for making the Blue Line Pro Comic Book Boards! I do a comic strip online w/ Keenspot (http://keenspot.com) and your product is wonderful. I can't begin to tell you what a time saver this is! Also I've found supplies in your art store that I can find no where else. So, again, thank you so very much!
Take care,
Jamie Robertson
Clan of the Cats
http://clanofthecats.com
Jamie,
Thanks for the feed back. I'll be checking out your strip.
B.

Hello,

I am a student at the Art Institute of Colorado majoring in computer animation, but I love comics and do some inking and coloring for a friend of mine trying to create his own comic book.

My question is are there any books on digital coloring out there at all??? I highly admire the coloring works in the Warlands, Battle Chasers, and most of the Image, Top Cow, comics and especially "Liquids" coloring style. I am just getting started with the coloring of comic books and while my work is alright it would really be nice to have a book that could help out us beginners.

I figure that with so many drawing and inking books, there should be a top colorist or two who would be interested in developing a "How to do Digital Inking" book. The only book I found out there on digital inking was an all Japanese and I for one definitely can't read it, though it has excellent step by step tutorials it's called "CG: A Beautiful Girls Computer Graphic Technique Guide" (just in case you were wondering).

If you guys have any suggestions or know of any books already out there please let me know seeing all of the different types of colorist styles are very confusing to a beginner such as myself and the internet tutorials really don't help with the really deep technique questions I have.
Thanks, CJ
CJ
We are planning a new book that will ship early 2002. Its working title is "Digital Coloring for Comic Books." We have noticed that there's a need for this and we are planning to make it available as soon as possible.
B.

Those stepping up this issue to answer questions.
Bob / Bob Hickey
M² / Mike Maydak
- Flint / Flint Henry
As always we try to pass the letters along to those of us that have the most knowledge of the subject that your letter is referring to. And, if all else fails we leave it to our most trusted senior editor Flint Henry (That's why he gets paid the big bucks).

Inking:
A Very Quick Overview

by Chris Dreier
   with Jacob Paplham

If you want to be an inker, the first thing you must ask yourself is "What is inking?" Contrary to popular belief, inking is not the same as tracing. If all you do is trace, your work will be amateurish at best. Inking is not secondary to penciling; they are both equally important. Inking and penciling have a symbiotic relationship: without pencilling, there is nothing to ink and without inking, the pencils look like a jumbled mess of lines. Think of inking as embellishing. You start with great pencils and make them look the best that you can. Inking separates foreground from background, makes important people or objects pop off the page, creates balance of white and black, and makes clothes look like clothes. While you're inking, keep in mind that inking plays an essential part in the creation of a quality comic book. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that the inks in a color book are less important than the inks in a B/W book. Because of this lax mentality, some of the flashier comics today would fall apart without the coloring. Avoid relying on the colorist to 'fill in the gaps'. Every page should be inked the same way no matter what type of book you're working on.

Studying the page

When you get your pages, don't start inking immediately; instead, take the time to study the pages and try to understand what the penciller was going for. You should know exactly what is going on in every panel. Study each page for roughly five to ten minutes before even grabbing a pen or loading your brush. It may sound silly, even a waste of time, but it enables you to better translate the penciller's vision to the reader. Occasionally there might be a panel that at first glance will look confusing to you, but you need to keep studying that panel until you understand it. If you don't understand what you're inking, the reader certainly won't understand it either. It's up to you to make sure that the reader will not be confused when they see the panel for the first time. By studying the page, it gives you an opportunity to pick out what's what, so

when you start inking that panel you won't have to guess. Guessing is bad. Studying the pages also gives you a chance to break each page down and decide which tools to use for each area of the page; that way you'll be well prepared when you actually start inking.

Pens and straight edges

After you're done studying and ready to start inking, begin with the borders. I suggest using Rotring Rapidoliner disposable pens ranging from sizes .25 to .70. If your straight edge is not raised just slightly from the table, tape some pennies to the bottom, so the ink will not smudge or streak when you pull the straight edge away. An added benefit to having your straight edge raised is you can also slightly tilt the pen while drawing a line to make much thicker lines with smaller pens. Neat, huh?

Gloves

After finishing the borders, you're ready to proceed to the first panel. If you're left-handed, work from right to left, and if you're right-handed work from left to right; this reduces smudges and whatnot. If you're ambidextrous, I guess you have more options than the rest of us. Wearing nylon or cotton retouching gloves also helps reduce smudging. Negative retouchers use these gloves, and I say if it's good enough for negative
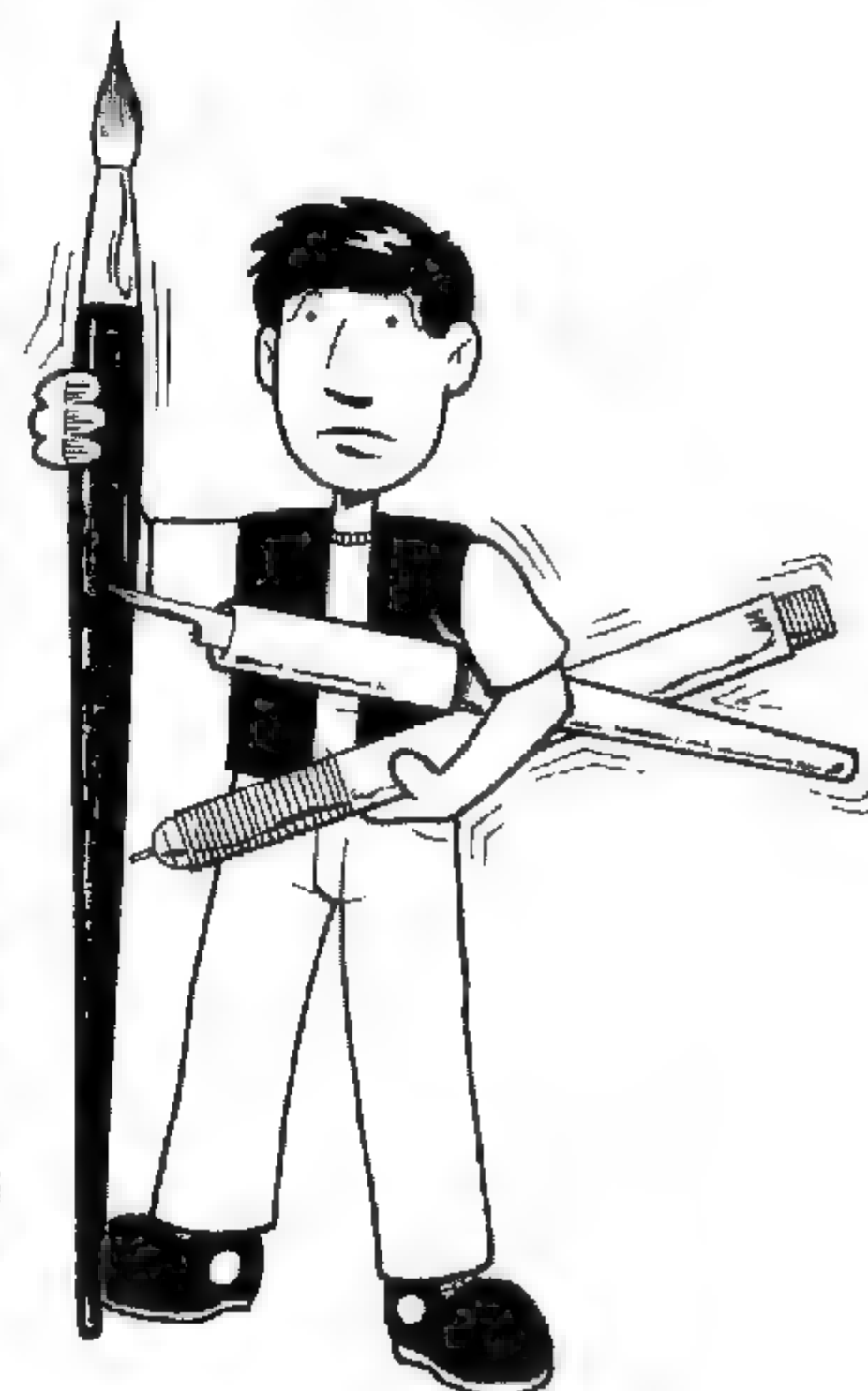
retouchers, then, by God, it's good enough for comic book inkers. You can find retouching gloves in art stores and, I would imagine, in photography shops as well. Before using your glove, however, I suggest cutting off the thumb and the next two fingers from it; otherwise, it's difficult to hold the tools.

Tools

Speaking of tools (nice transition, huh?), there are three types of tools you're going to want to use while inking: nibs, pens, and brushes. Each of these three tools give the drawing a different feel. I've found that pens work best for inking cars, buildings, phone booths, and other things that are solid and inanimate; crow quills or nibs work great when inking rocks, trees, crosshatching, little details in faces, and cracks in concrete; and brushes work wonderfully when inking figures. Many inkers use nibs to ink figures, but I prefer brushes because they create smooth lines and an organic feel that make bodies, hair, clouds, and clothing seem more "alive". But that's just a personal preference. You should experiment with the tools and see what's right for you. And remember to change tools every so often. Holding on to something of the same size for an extended period of time will give your hand cramps.

Some basics

Remember, when inking backgrounds and foregrounds it is the inker's responsibility to create depth. Use thinner lines to show objects in the distance and thicker lines for closer objects. This is not always the rule, but 99.9% of the time it is. Contour lines are the most important lines in the figure. If you mess up the contour lines, the whole figure will fall apart. The contour shows where the light is coming from, which, in turn, creates weight and substance. By varying the line weights - the varied thickness of a line - you can make a figure look strong and vital. However, keeping the line weights all the same can make that figure look weak or possibly push the figure into the background. A line going from thin to thick creates weight and depth. For example, a thicker line under a chin will create an instant shadow. Again, look at some comics to get a better understanding of how varying line weights add to the realization of a figure.

Inking is not style; that comes after you've done it for awhile. There are basic principles that you must abide by. Once you have a firm grasp on these principles, you'll be able to twist them without hindering the drawings. But until you've become a master of the inks, keep practicing your inking skills and continue studying the mechanics of inking in professional comic books (especially Angel from Dark Horse Comics *SHAMLESS PLUG*).

Well, that's a very quick overview of inking. I hope you enjoyed it and learned something that will help you on your journey to inker stardom.

Example A
This panel is a very good example of using thick lines to separate foreground and background objects (in this case a figure)

Example B
If you look at the contour lines of the two men standing you'll notice that the lines move from thin to thick at the bottom of their heads. This 'plants' the head onto the shoulders and adds an instant shadow. Also, notice the contours on their clothing.
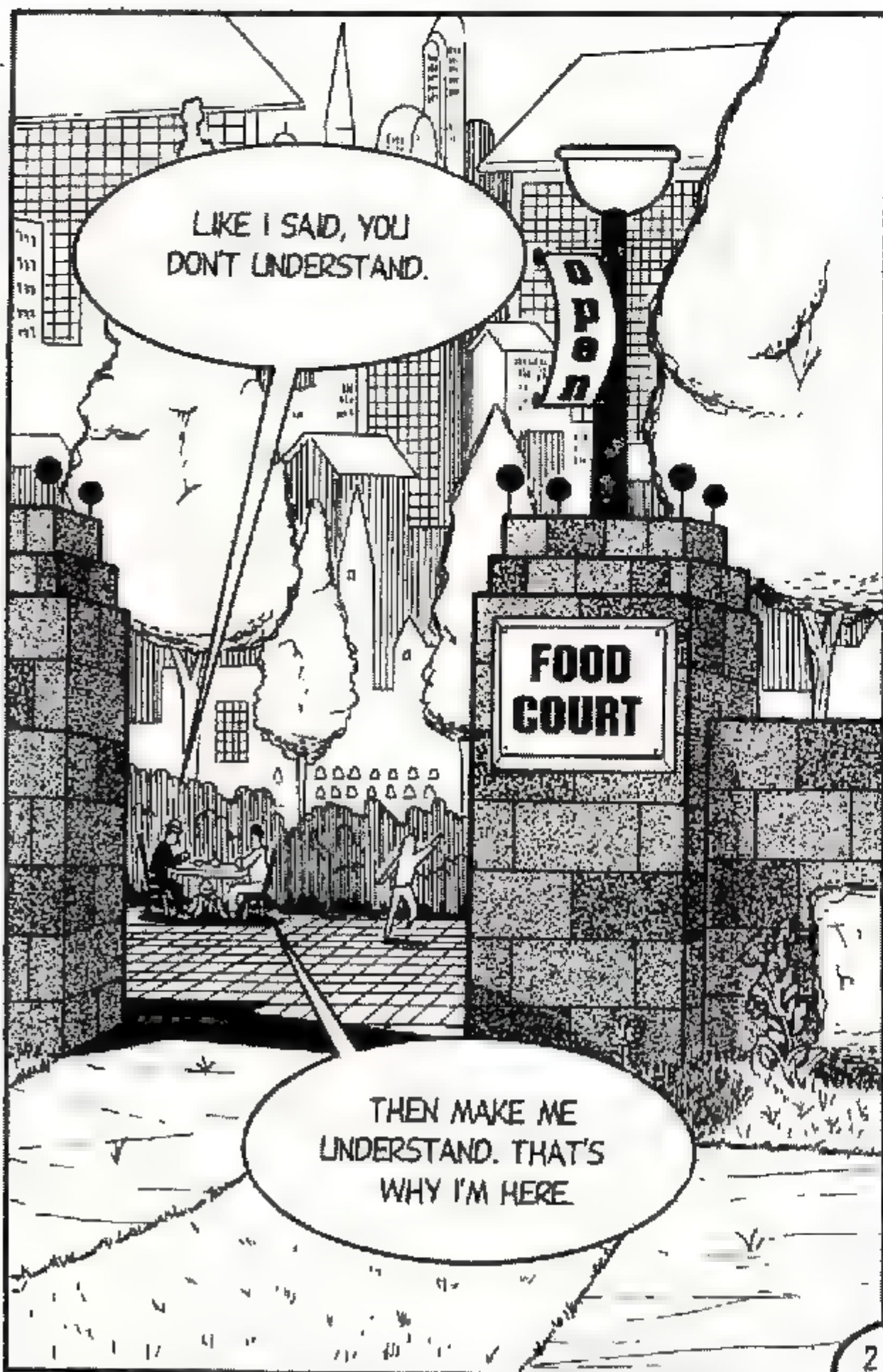

Example C
Another good example of foreground/background separation. However, this time we have many layers. The man up close running, the second guy running, the people at the bus stop and the building. The building and vertical lines to the right are mostly there to balance the panel.

All pictures are © 2001 Chris Dreier

FIRST OF ALL, IF YOU WERE IN MY SHOES, YO—

I JUST DON'T SEE HOW YOU PEOPLE HAVE A PROBLEM. YOU'RE FREE IN THE CITY OF REFUGE. YOU CAN WORK AND GO WHERE YOU WANT—

Example D
Notice the lines on the man shrugging. Thin to thick and vice versa. This is creating folds and shadows. On his shoulder on the left there's a thicker line. That's only there to pull him from the background a bit because there's nothing behind him.


LIKE I SAID, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

open

FOOD COURT

THEN MAKE ME UNDERSTAND. THAT'S WHY I'M HERE.

Example E
A great example of textures and many layers. There's grass, brick, concrete, trees, and a rusty (if not just dirty) lamppost with the 'open' sign on it. And yes, the brick is all freehand stipple.

Recommended Reading
I used to hate it when an editor or an artist would look at my stuff and tell me to buy a book, but I'm going to do the same. Sorry.

The
Art of
COMIC BOOK
Inking
by
GARY MARTIN
&
STEVE RUDE
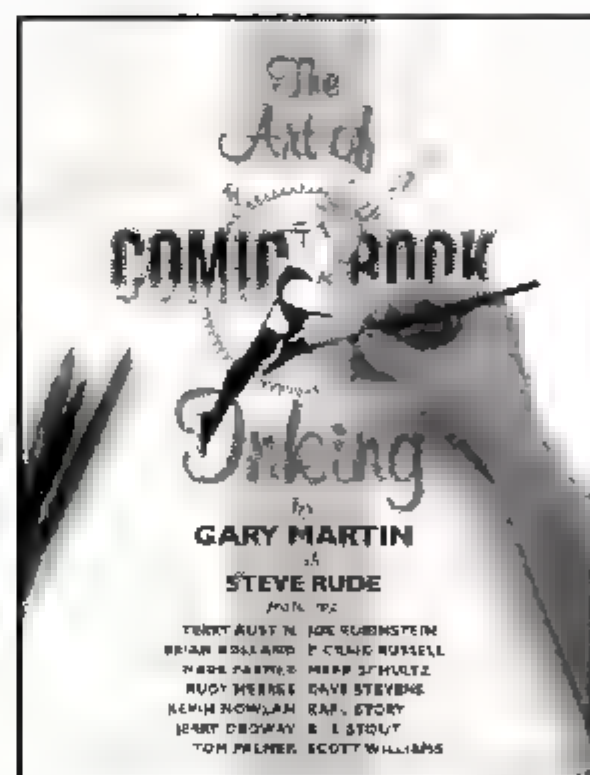
The Art of Comic Book Inking by Gary Martin published by Dark Horse Comics
I love this book. I bought it when it first came out about four years ago, and I still keep it next to my art tab e. It's invaluable. Gary goes into nearly every aspect of inking, including a little section on the business aspect. A great book that I can't say enough about.

Drawing Dynamic Comics by Andy Smith
This book is mainly for pencilers, but it has a section in the back on inking. Like Gary Martin's book, this one has a few professional inkers, each tackling a different page. An awesome book.
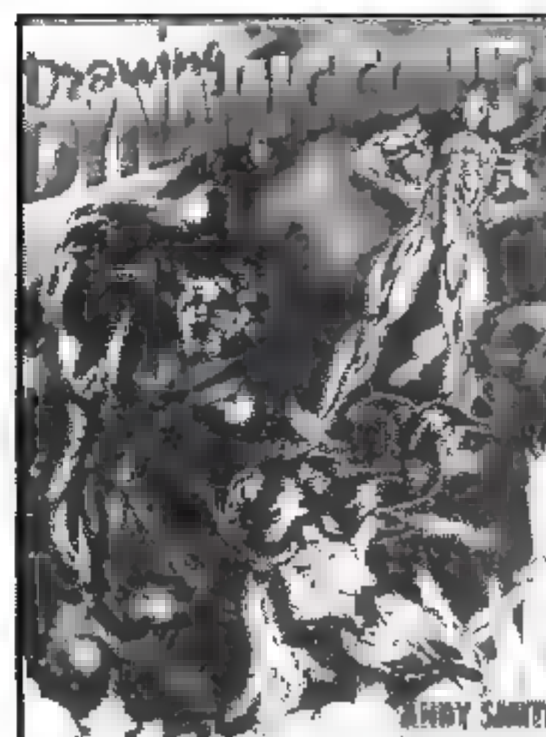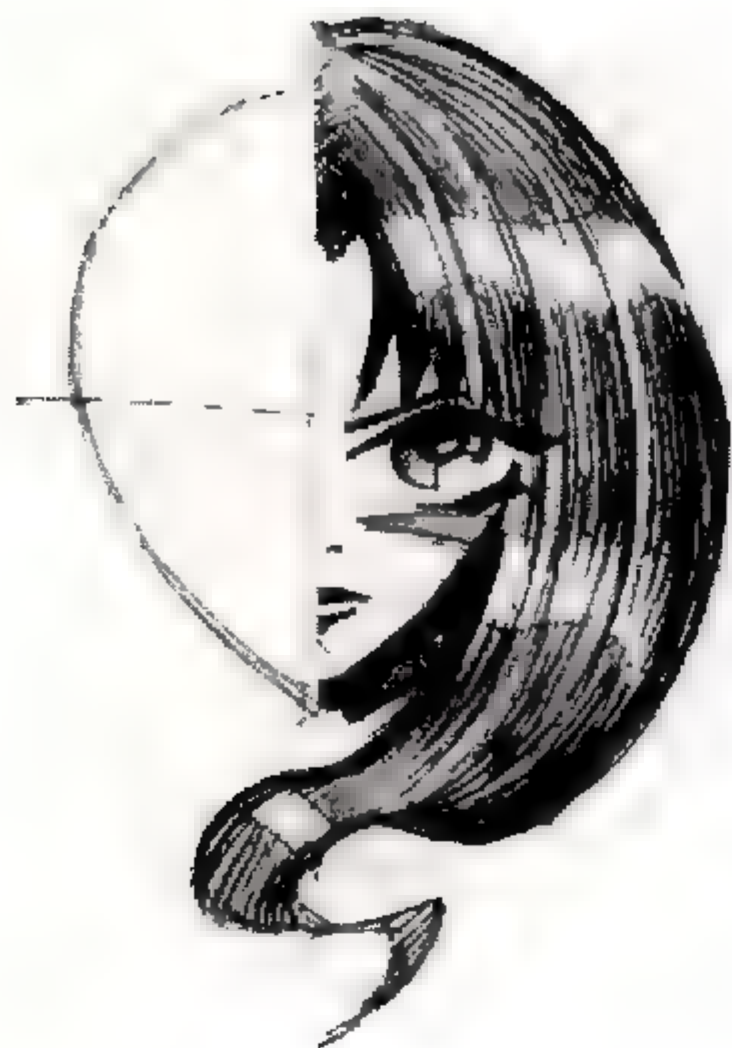
HOW TO DRAW MANGA

by John Gravato

Back to basics: Faces

A. The first stage to any manga face should be the basic shape of the head. Think of the head as a pinched oval. Draw the central lines that run through the head, dividing it into four parts.

example A
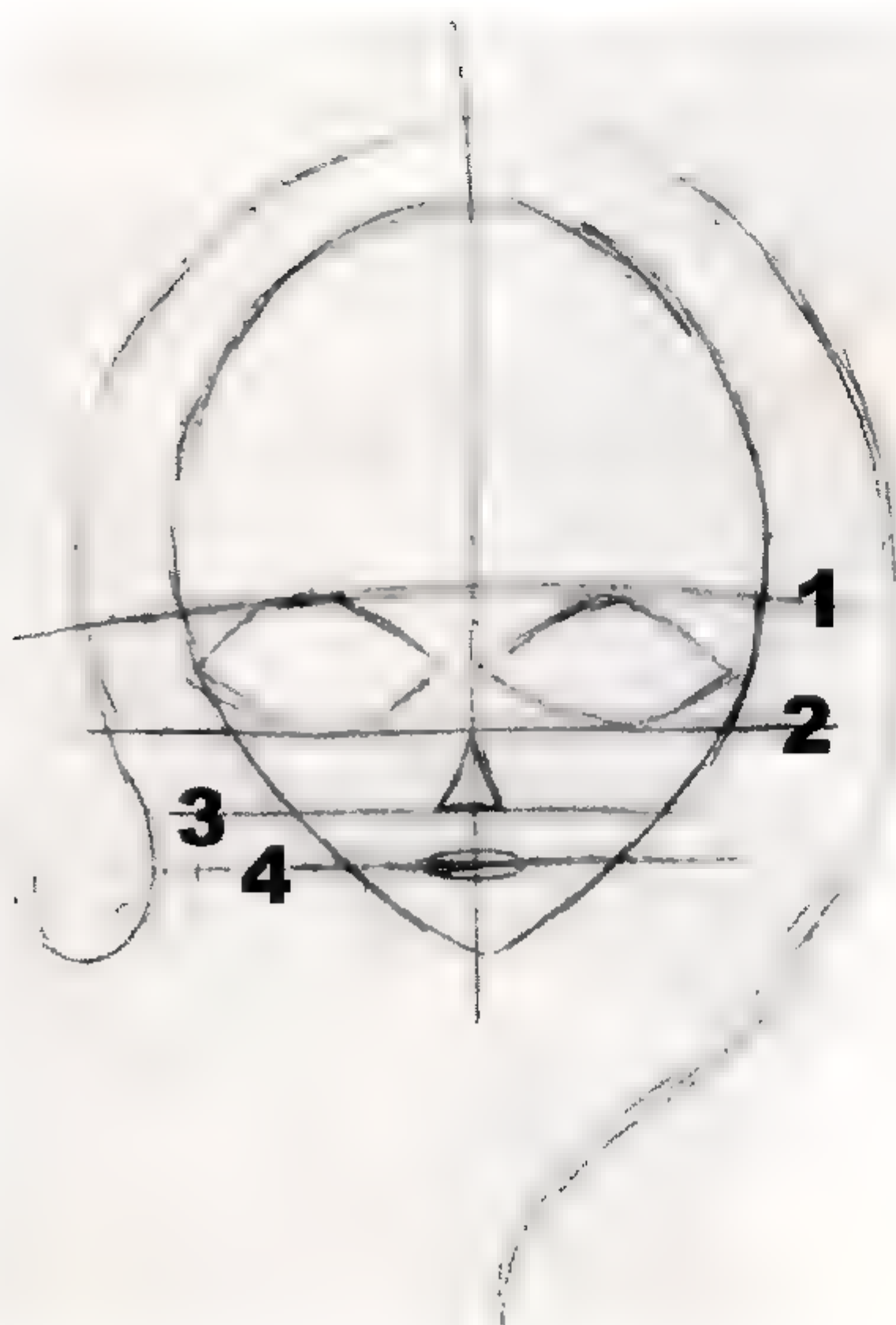
B. Next, draw the feature guidelines (1,2,3,4). These are lines that will position the features; i.e. the nose, mouth and, most importantly, the eyes. Notice how all the features fall below the central line (1). This is the strongest characteristic of manga; a large central area (eyes) pinching down to a small mouth and chin. The lines depicting the hair are added. The hair should always be 'big,' emphasizing the facial features even more. The nose is best started as a small triangle and the mouth just a simple oval.

example B

C. Now start refining the basic shapes so as to have clear lines from which to finish the drawing off. Add the sparkles in the eyes (sketches 1-3). Remember there are many ways to make sparkles – I'm just showing you one way. Highlights in the eyes are what makes them look dazzling and alive. At this stage, begin bulking out the hair. Remember, "BIG"!

1

2

3
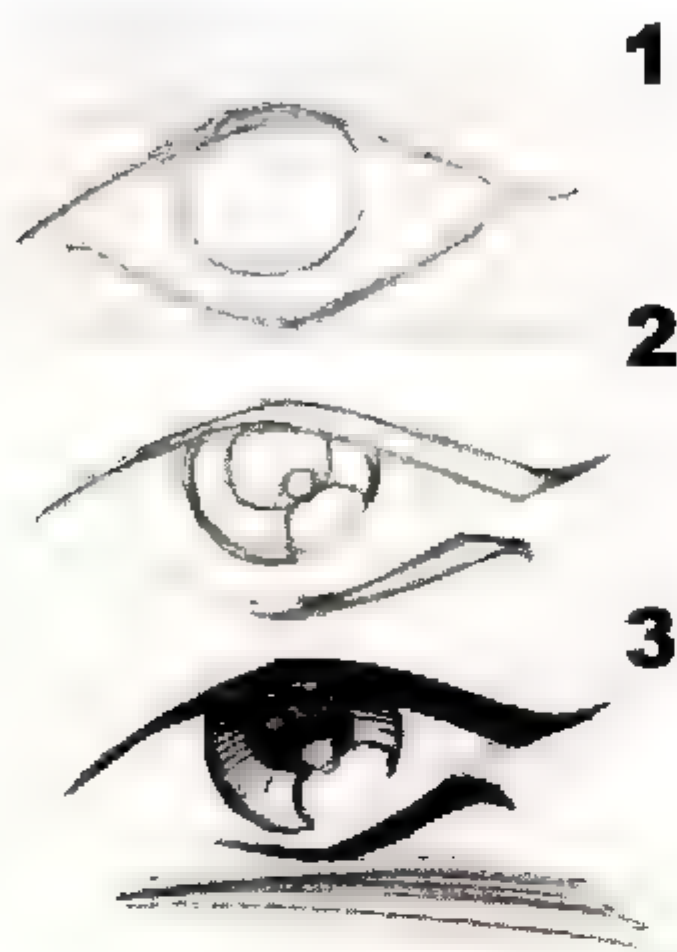
example C

D. Another manga characteristic is the strong highlights in the hair. Flowing sections of clear paper are the easiest way to go (5).

Now for the final rendering. A good point to remember is to darken the eyelashes and make them quite thick, but don't close off the lashes completely. Leave some white area towards the nose. Now the eyes are enhanced, which makes them look sexier. Eyes are by far the most striking and important features of the face as they will communicate the character's expressions and bring them to life! Expressions are a vital part of manga, but that's another lesson for another day...

These are the first steps to understanding the basic building blocks of manga. These principles can help you not only draw your own manga characters but also help you understand the fundamentals of drawing in general.

John Gravato

You can find out more about John and his art at the following website: www.bio-techanism.co.uk

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Example D

Coloring Over
Pencils

by Aaron Hubrich
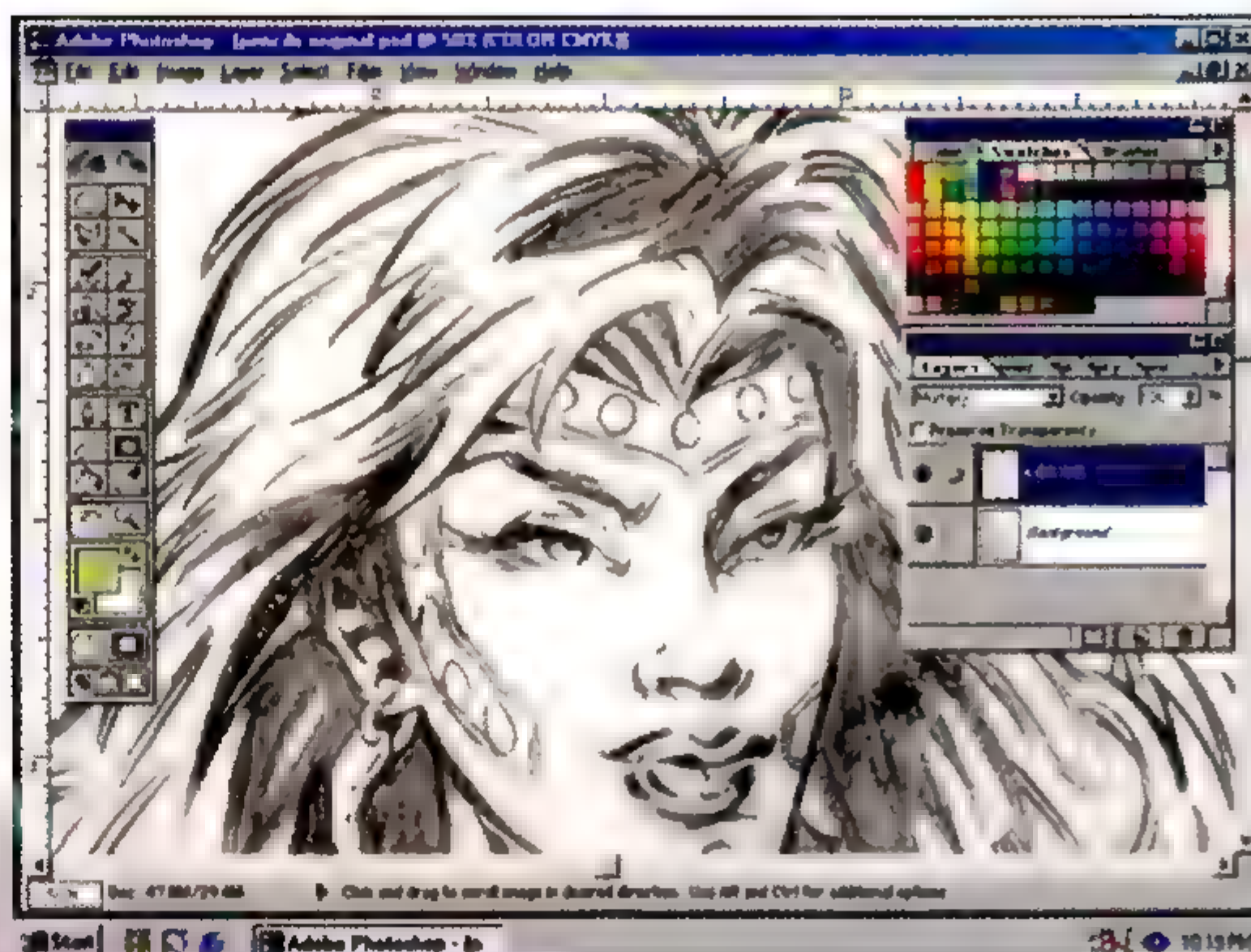
What's the one thing that puts shivers down an inker's spine? Colorists that color over pencils. I really don't think these guys have much to worry about though. It's a technique that is really cool, but only in certain instances. I think if you ask your average comic book fan, they'll tell you they still like the inked look to a comic. They may not be able to explain it in detail, but they'll just like it better. Do "non-inked" pencils have a future? Sure! Because it's something else for artists to offer an audience. But I honestly think that computers won't "replace" a good inker. Computers are *tools* just like pens and brushes.

Every once in a while some pencils will come along that really should stay pencils. It'd be a shame to put ink on them! The only thing they're missing is color. Well, that's what I'm going to show you how to do. We're going to put some color on nice penciled work…without the ink.

Pic 1:
The original scan of the pencils, scanned full size at 300 dpi.

Let's start with the scan: whip out your **flatbed scanner**, set it up to **scan at 300dpi** (ppi), and do it in "grayscale" full size (or black and white photo as with most scanners). Once you have the image in **Photoshop**, clean it up using the **Eraser Tool**. Take care to remove the background "mess", the smudges, anything that is going to distract the viewer. I probably wouldn't do too much to the figures, because you will lose the "tone" that makes the penciled piece look the way it does.

After you have the piece fit to be colored, change the **Mode to CMYK**. Go ahead and make a separate "color" layer. You should have the base "pencil" layer and now a "color" layer. Make sure you have the color layer set on **"Multiply"**. This will allow you to color over the pencils without covering them up. This Multiply option is the key to coloring over the pencils, but it *will* require you to have a very steady hand. Coloring over pencils that are inked allows you the option to use the **Paintbucket Tool** quite a bit. You can do this as well with the non-inked stuff, but it gives an extremely hard edge that doesn't look right when coloring over the penciled stuff.

I use a **Wacom tablet**, and I recommend using one if you plan on coloring pencils, mainly because of the fatigue that can set in after several hours of coloring. In the piece featured in this article I only used the one color layer. If you add another layer, let's say another color layer, keep in mind that the next layers should be set as **"normal"**. The reason is·

Multiply on the new 3rd layer won't allow you to do high-lights. It *will* show darker colors, but not lighter. Set the new layer on Normal, and you should have no problem doing your highlights on a separate layer. I just choose to do them all on the same layer because I imagine myself as a painter. I just grab color and slap it on there! My advice is to put each stage on a different layer so you can easily fix something if need be, instead of patching things up the hard way. That is the cool thing about Photoshop...you can do it any way you want!

Coloring pencils allows the colorist to really explore what it's like to "paint" with Photoshop. I had a blast using the Airbrush tool, applying the color as need be. One benefit of the Wacom tablet is that you have pressure sensitivity, and that allows you to put an amount of color onto the piece similar to a real paint brush. It's the closest thing to actually having a brush in your hand.

There really is no secret to making pencils look nice by applying color. You just have to have your settings set correctly so you're not wasting precious time messing around. Leave that up to me, and then read up in the next article! Until next time...Happy coloring!

Pic 2:
You can see where I've started to remove the background.
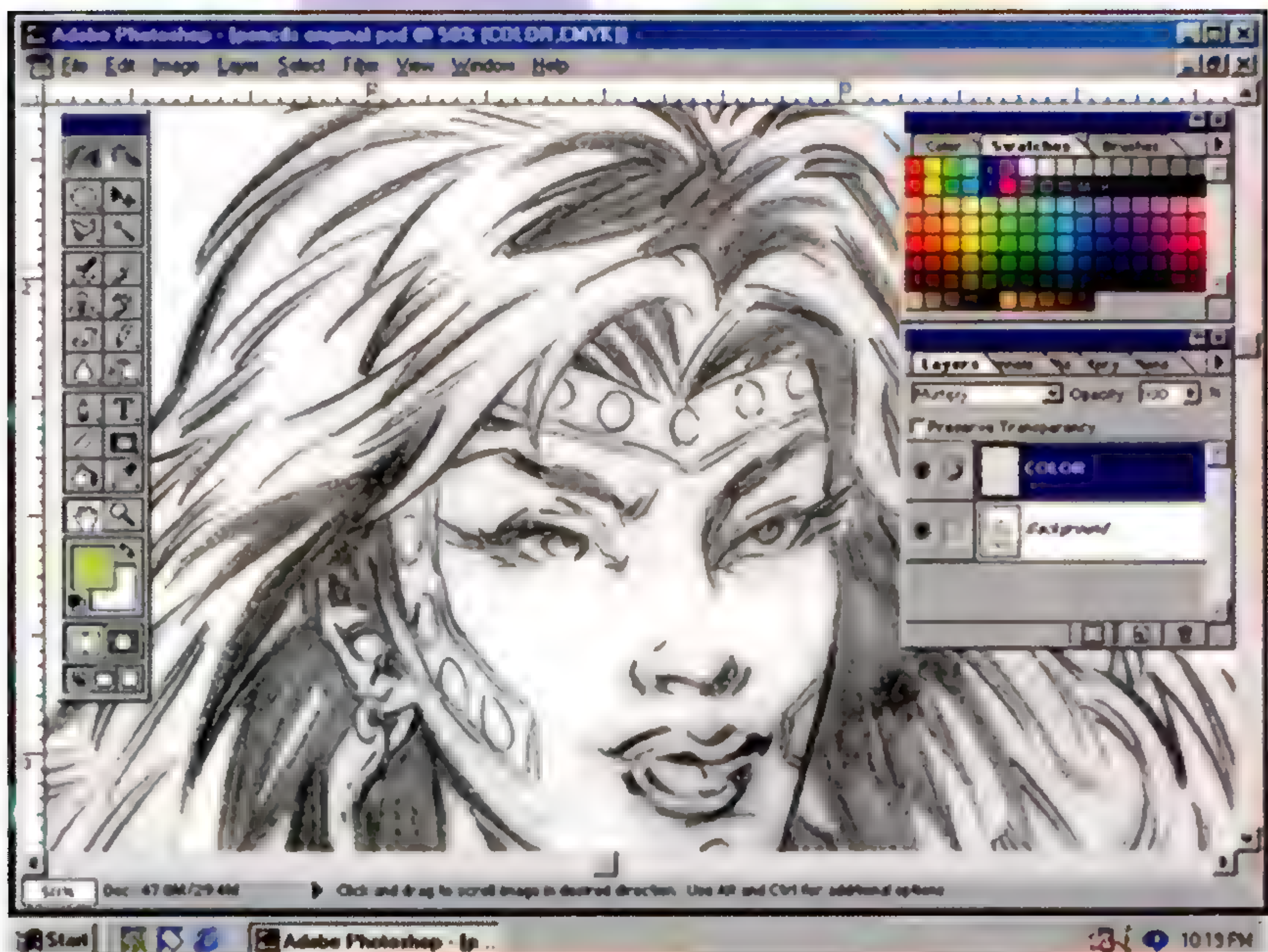
Pic 3:
I've added my color layer after cleaning up the drawing. Make sure you have the color layer set on "Multiply".

Pic 4:
The base tones. You'll do most of your work here, but you'll begin to see where you can add your highlights.
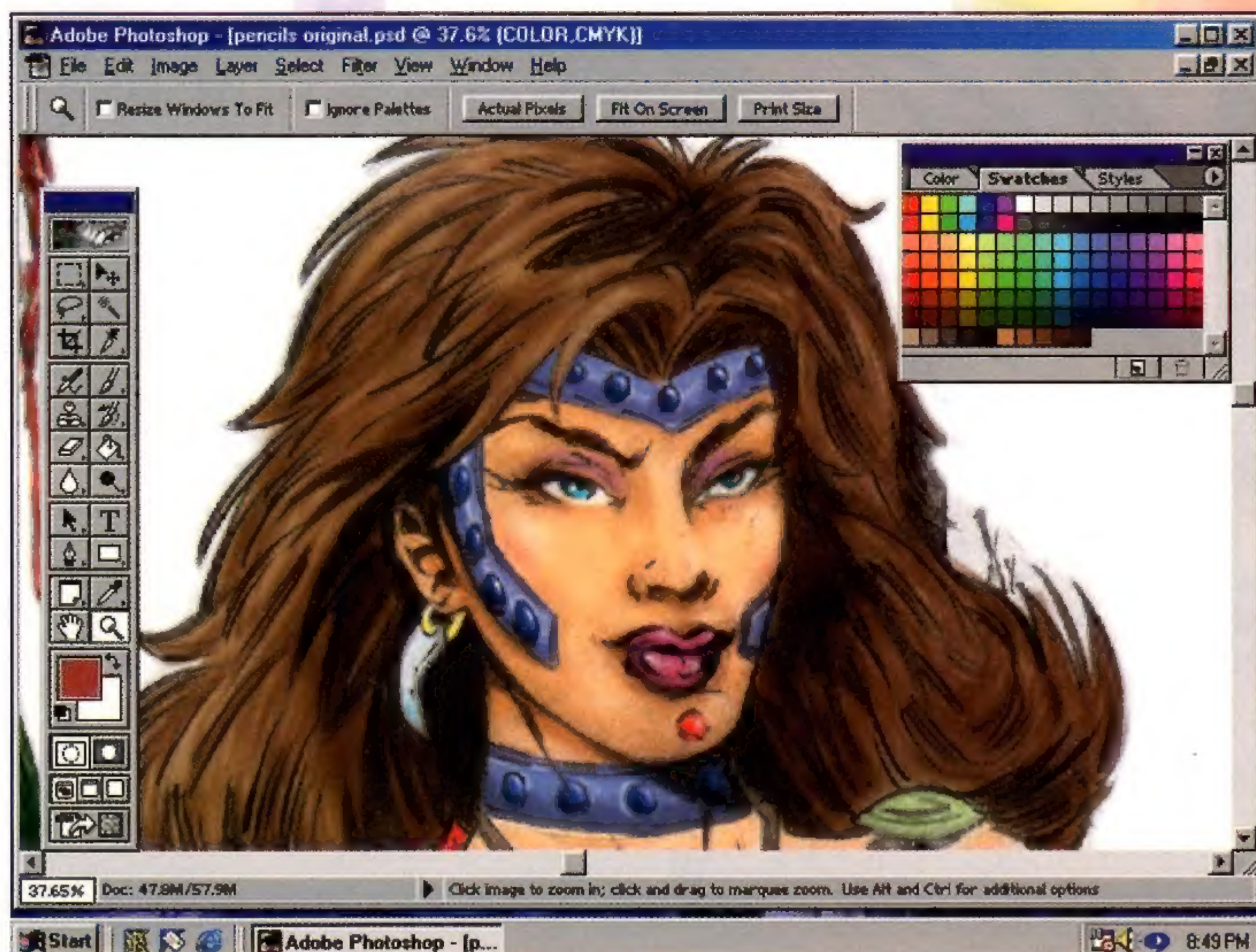
Pic 5:
The highlights and color tweaks. On this picture you'll see where I've added depth with the darker hair color. This is the really fun part of the process. This is the time where you see the build up of color start to work.

NOW EVERYONE
CAN BE A HERO.
THE LITTLE WHITE MOUSE BENEFIT PRINT

In response to the World Trade Tower tragedy of September 11th, Paul Sizer will be offering an art print honoring the New York City firefighters and rescue workers who lost their lives. The money generated by sales of the 11" x 17" art print will go directly to The New York Fire 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund, a relief service that provides financial support to the families of the firefighters and rescue workers who died saving others during the attack. Blue Line Pro, the publishers of Sizer's comic series LITTLE WHITE MOUSE, have stepped up to the plate and will facilitate the production and sales of the print through their own online store. Sizer will oversee the entire project and personally forward the donations collected to the fund's administrators.

The Little White Mouse Benefit Print is available to view in the blinking "News Updates" section of the Little White Mouse Flash website (www.littlewhitemouse.com) . From there, people can link directly to the exclusive sales page within the Blue Line Pro online store (www.bluelinepro.com) or to The New York Fire 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund website for more information. For a small donation of $10.00 or more, supporters will receive one 11" x 17" LWM Benefit digital art print on hi-gloss photo grade paper, mailed directly to them. People can pay either by credit card at Blue Line Pro's special PayPal (lwmbenefit@bluelinepro.com), by phone at 859-282-0096 or mail to:
LWM Benefit c/o Blue Line Pro, P.O. Box 6426, Florence, KY 41022-6426 or
8385 U.S. Highway 42, Florence, KY 41042.

"It's certainly easier to write about having boundless hope in a comic book story than to actually manifest it in real life..."
-Paul Sizer

www.littlewhitemouse.com
www.bluelinepro.com

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